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ANDHRA PRADESH SAHITHYA AKADEMI

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ప రి చ య ము

సహస్రాబ్దాలుగా ప్రవర్ధమానమగుచున్న తెలుగు సంస్కృతిని తెలుగు దేశపు నలుచెరగుల పరిచితముచేయు సంకల్పముతో 1975వ సంవత్సరమును తెలుగు సాంస్కృతిక సంవత్సరముగ ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ ప్రభుత్వము ప్రకటించినది. అందుకు అనుగుణమైన కార్యక్రమాలను నిర్వహింప జేయుటయేగాక, ప్రపంచము లోని వివిధ దేశాలలో నివసించుచున్న తెలుగువారి సాంస్కృతిక ప్రతినిధులందఱును ఒకచోట సమావేశమగు వసతిని కల్పించుటకై. 1975, ఏప్రిల్ 12 (తెలుగు ఉగాది) మొదలుగ ప్రపంచతెలుగు మహాసభలు హైదరాబాదున జరుగు నటుల ప్రభుత్వము నిర్ణయించినది. అందుకు ఒక ఆహ్వానసంఘము ఏర్పాటుయినది. ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ ప్రభుత్వ ముఖ్యమంత్రి మాన్యశ్రీ జి.ఎం. వెంగళరావుగారు ఆ సంఘమునకు అధ్యక్షులు; విద్యాశాఖమంత్రి మాన్యశ్రీ మండలి వెంకట కృష్ణారావుగారు దాని కార్యనిర్వాహకాధ్యక్షులు; ఆర్థికమంత్రి మాన్యశ్రీ పిడతల రంగారెడ్డిగారు ఆర్థిక, సంస్థా కార్యక్రమాల సమన్వయ సంఘాల అధ్యక్షులు.

ఆ సంఘము, ప్రపంచ తెలుగు మహాసభల ఆధ్వర్యవమున తెలుగు జాతి సాంస్కృతిక వైభవమును తెలియజేయుటకు అనువుగ ఆంధ్రభాషా సాహిత్య, కళా చరిత్రాదికములను గురించి ఉత్తమములు, ప్రామాణికములునగు కొన్ని లఘుగ్రంథములను ప్రకటించవలెనని సంకల్పించి, ఆకార్యనిర్వాహణ కై 44 మంది సభ్యులుకల ఒక విద్యుత్ సంఘమును, శ్రీ నూకల నరోత్తమరెడ్డిగారి అధ్యక్షతన నియమించినది. ఆ విద్యుత్ సంఘము ఆ లఘుగ్రంథముల వస్తువుల నిర్దేశించి వాని రచనకై ఆయా రంగములందు పేరుగనిన ప్రముఖులను రచయితలుగా యెన్నుకొనినది. ఈ విధముగ సిద్ధమైన గ్రంథములలో భాషా, సాహిత్య, చారిత్రక విషయములకు సంబంధించిన వానిని ప్రకటించు బాధ్యతను ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ సాహిత్య అకాడమీ వహింప వలసినదిగ ప్రపంచ తెలుగు

మహాసభా కార్యానిర్వాహకాధ్యక్షులు మాన్యశ్రీ మండలి వెంకట కృష్ణారావుగారు
అకాడమీని కోరిరి. మహాసభా సభలత కొరకై కృషిచేయు సంకల్పముతో
ఈ బాధ్యతను వహించుటకు అకాడమీ సంతోషముతో అంగీకరించినది.

ఆ విధముగ ప్రకటితములగు గ్రంథశ్రేణిలో ఈ **Luminaries of
Andhra Pradesh** అను ఈ ఆంగ్ల గ్రంథమును రచించిన డా॥ S. శ్రీదేవి ఆంగ్ల
పాఠక లోకమునకు పరిచితలు. వారికి మేము కృతజ్ఞతాబద్ధులము గ్రంథమును
నిర్దుష్టముగ, చక్కగ ముద్రించిన జయశ్రీ ప్రింటింగ్ అండ్ బుక్ బైండింగ్
వర్క్స్ ప్రెస్ వారికి మా కృతజ్ఞత.

హైదరాబాదు,

తేది. 17-1-76

దేవులపల్లి రామానుజరావు

కార్యదర్శి

ఆంగ్లప్రదేశ్ సాహిత్య అకాడమీ

ముందుమాట

ఎన్నో ఏళ్లుగా అనుకుంటున్న ప్రపంచ తెలుగు మహాసభలు గత ఏప్రిల్ 12 మొదలుగ వైభవోపేతంగా జరిగినవి. ప్రపంచంలోని తెలుగువారి ప్రతినిధులందరిని ఒకచోట సమీకరించివలెనని పెద్దలందరూ కన్నకలలు వలించిన శుభ సమయమది. గడచిన ఉగాది, రెండువేల అయిదు వందల సంవత్సరాల తెలుగు జాతి చరిత్రలో, మరుపురాని మధుర ఘట్టము కాగలదు.

క్రీస్తుపూర్వం మూడవశతాబ్దికిచెందిన శాతవాహన రాజుల కాలంనుండి తెలుగు ప్రజలకు ఒక విశిష్టమైన చరిత్ర ఉన్నది. భారతదేశంలో తెలుగు మాట్లాడే ప్రజలు దాదాపు ఐదుకోట్లకు పైగా ఉన్నారు. హిందీ మాట్లాడేవారి తరువాతిస్థానం తెలుగువారిది. బౌద్ధ పూర్వయుగమునుంచి ఇటీవల బ్రిటిష్ సామ్రాజ్య పరిపాలనాయుగం వరకూ తెలుగువారు పెద్దయెత్తున ప్రపంచం నలుమూలలకూ వలస వెళ్ళడం జరిగింది. అట్లు వెళ్ళిన తెలుగువారు తమ భాషా సంస్కృతి సంప్రదాయాలను ఆయా జాతీయ జీవన విధానాలతో మేళవించి, వాటిని సుసంపన్నంగా చేస్తూఉన్నారు.

ప్రపంచ తెలుగు మహాసభల ప్రధానలక్ష్యం తెలుగు ప్రజల, తెలుగు అభిమానుల ప్రతినిధులను ఒక వేదికమీద సమావేశపర్చడం. జాతీయ, అంతర్జాతీయ సాంస్కృతిక రంగాలలో తెలుగువారు చేయవలసిన కృషినిగూర్చి చర్చించి, నిర్ణయించుకోవడానికీ, తద్వారా వివిధ చైతన్య స్రవంతులను ఏకోన్ముఖంచేసి మన సాంస్కృతిక సంబంధాలను దృఢతరం చేసుకోవడానికీ ఆ మహాసభలు దోహదకారులు అయినవి. అంతేకాక ఈ మహాసభలు ఆర్థమైన భావ సమైక్యతకు ప్రాతిపదికలై తెలుగు జాతిని సమైక్యం చేసినవి; ఆ విధంగా జాతీయ అభ్యుదయానికి తోడ్పడగలిగినవనీ విశ్వసిస్తున్నాను.

1975 ఏప్రిల్ 12వ తేదీన, తెలుగు ఉగాదిరోజున. ప్రారంభమై ఒక వారం రోజులపాటు జరిగిన ఆ మహాసభలలో వివిధదేశాలనుంచీ, వివిధరాష్ట్రాల

నుంచీ, యునెస్కోవంటి అంతర్జాతీయ సంస్థలనుంచీ వీచ్చేసిన ప్రముఖులు ప్రతి నిధులుగానో, పరిశీలకులుగానో పాల్గొన్నారు. ఆ మహాసభల సమయంలో చర్చా గోష్ఠాలు, ప్రదర్శనలు. ప్రచురణలు మొదలైన కార్యక్రమాలు జరిగినవి. దేశ విదేశాలలోని తెలుగువారి సంస్కృతి, తెలుగు భాషా సాహిత్యాల కళల అభివృద్ధి, వైజ్ఞానిక సాంకేతిక ప్రగతి మొదలైన విషయాలపై చర్చా గోష్ఠాలు జరిగినవి. తెలుగువారి సాంస్కృతిక వైభవాన్ని వివిధకోణాలనుంచి ప్రస్తుతం చేసే ఒక ప్రదర్శన ఏర్పాటు అయింది. తెలుగువారి సమగ్ర స్వరూపాన్ని సందర్శించడానికి వీలైన సంగ్రహాలయన్ని (మ్యూజియంను) స్థాపించడానికి ఈ ప్రదర్శన బీజ భూతమయింది. తెలుగువారి సంస్కృతిని నిరూపించే సాంస్కృతిక కార్యక్రమాలు వారంరోజుల పాటు సాగినవి. తెలుగు ప్రజల సంస్కృతి సంప్రదాయాలను విశదంచేసే ప్రత్యేక సంచికలు తెలుగు ఇంగ్లీషు, హిందీ, ఉర్దూ భాషలలో విడుదల అయినాయి. ఈ కార్యక్రమాలలో భాగమే ఈ గ్రంథ ప్రచురణ.

తెలుగు ప్రజలు భాష, సాహిత్యం, చరిత్ర, సంస్కృతి, కళలు మొదలైన వివిధ రంగాలలో సాధించిన ఘనవిజయాలను విశదంచేసే గ్రంథాలు అనేకం ఈ మహాసభల సమయంలో విడుదల అయినవి ఈ గ్రంథాలను రచించి, సకాలంలో మాకు అందించిన రచయితరందరకూ వా కృతజ్ఞతలు. ఈ గ్రంథాలను ప్రచురించే భారం వహించడానికి ముందుకు వచ్చిన అకాడమీ ఆధినేతలను అభినందిస్తున్నాను. తెలుగువారి విశిష్టతలను విశదంచేసే ఈ గ్రంథాలు సహృదయులందరి ఆదరణ పొందగలవని విశ్వసిస్తున్నాను. అయితే, ఇంతమాత్రంచేతనే ప్రపంచతెలుగు మహాసభల ఆశయాలు సఫలం కాగలవని నేను అనుకొనడంలేదు. జేయవలసినది ఇంకా ఎంతో ఉంది. ఈ మహాసభల అనంతరము నెలకొల్పబడిన “అంతర్జాతీయ తెలుగు విజ్ఞానసంస్థ” మహాసభల ఆశయసాధనకు పూనుకొనడమే కాక జాతీయ, అంతర్జాతీయ సాంస్కృతిక సంబంధాలను ధృఢతరం చేయగలదని నమ్ముతున్నాను.

జరిగం వెంగళరావు

అధ్యక్షులు

ప్రపంచ తెలుగు మహాసభలు

INTRODUCTION

Andhra Pradesh is singularly fortunate in having a glorious heritage that dates back to prehistoric times – heritage that has been continually enriched through the ages by a succession of great men and women.

Each one of them has contributed so richly to the culture of our land, that even a recollection of their achievements in various spheres of human endeavour – Fine Arts, Religion, Philosophy, Administration and Social Service should prove inspiring. Andhra and her people whose ancestry could be traced to Itareya Brahmana have a recorded history of over 2000 years beginning with the reign of Shatavahana kings, known also as Shalivahanas, the chief of whom was Shrimukha who established the kingdom of Andhra about 300 B. C. with Srikakulam as his capital.

The next great king we hear of from the Shalivahana dynasty is Haludu who was a great scholar and poet in Prakrit which was the State language. The best of his available works is 'Gadha Saptasati' which testifies to his great learning and poetic gift. His minister, Gunadhya was also a well known writer whose 'Brihatkatha' is a rare volume of short stories.

This was literally the golden age of the Andhras when people prospered in every way. Buddhism was the chief religion. There were many Buddha Viharas and Bouddha Stupas which proclaimed the architectural grandeur of the people of the time. There were in addition great centres of education, the chief of them being "Dhanyakataka" which is none other than "Dhara-nikota" situated in the vicinity of Amaravati near modern Guntur.

During this period it is said that people were engaged in a good deal of trade and business carried on with not only neighbouring States, but foreign places also. Shipping was there – the principal industry of the Andhras as evidenced from their coins which bore the stamp of the ship and the sea.

Although Buddhism was then the predominant religion of the people, Shalivahana kings, who practised Hinduism, patronised it, a fact that speaks volumes for their catholicity and tolerance. The world renowned Buddhist, Acharya Nagarjuna belongs to this time.

The next important dynasty of kings after the Shalivahanas was that of Ikshvaku in whose time, it is said people from far and near came to see the Buddhist Viharas and Stupas and also to learn at first hand the tenets of Buddhist philosophy. The “Nagarjuna Konda” was the centre of attraction; the chief Stupa, the “Mahachaitya” in it was a “must” for all the tourists, as it was reported to have contained one of the relics of Lord Buddha.

The Buddhist architecture of the day became renowned and the life-story of Buddha was depicted beautifully on the stone that spoke so eloquently about the historical times of the Enlightened one.

After the Ikshvaku kings there were a number of other dynasties such as Brihatpalayanas, Shalamkayanas, Kandaras, Vishnugundins who ruled the Andhra territory for about two hundred years.

It was sometime in this period that many North Indians came down to this region and finally settled down here. It could also be said that from now on Buddhism was slowly losing its appeal and influence on the people. Its decline gave fillip, as it were, to Hinduism which slowly and gradually began to once again establish itself. It tried to regain its lost prestige among the people who in their turn started once again to practise the old religion.

There is a change in the language too. Sanskrit has taken the place of Prakrit. This was the time when Telugu language was born.

Now the famous Chalukya Kshatriyas who were related to Pulakesi Maharaja began to rule over the Andhra region. It was Pulakesi, the great king, who had the valour and courage to defeat Harsha Vardhana. It was at this time the Chola Maharajas were ruling in the South. The Chalukyas and Cholas drew close to each by marriages and were united. It was Raja Raja Chola Maharaja's sister Kundavamba who was married to Vimaladitya and their son was Raja Raja Narendra who married Rajendra Chola's daughter Ammanga Devi. Raja Raja Narendra's rule began sometime in the second decade of the eleventh century.

It was in the court of Raja Raja Narendra, that our first great Telugu poet Nannaya flourished as the "Asthana Kavi". It was again during this period that great and solid foundations were laid for Telugu poetry. Raja Raja Narendra encouraged Nannaya to write Andhra Mahabharatam which was readily begun by him. This was in fact the very first of our Telugu books.

After the reign of Raja Raja Narendra, there was a great deal of political turmoil not only in the Andhra area but in many other parts of the country.

The Kannada territory was ruled by Tribhuvana Malla Vikramaditya Maharaja. He also belonged to the Chalukya dynasty. Telangana then was under the same Western Chalukya kings. They, with the help of the Kannada ruler, attempted to take back the Vengi Kingdom which was in the Andhra region, but were not successful. Andhra was already broken up into small kingdoms. The Kannada representative rulers of Telangana who were of Kakatiya dynasty were gradually becoming independent and in course of time became the supreme power of Andhra. The chief Kakatiya who established himself as the

ruler of Andhra and Telangana at the time was Ganapatideva Maharaja

This is a milestone in the Modern History of the Andhras. From now on the Andhras under the Kakatiya rulers made tremendous progress not only by establishing peace but also by building up the State and contributing in various ways to the culture and civilisation of the Andhras.

It was Ganapati Deva Maharaja who consolidated the Telugu speaking world. His kingdom extended from Kalinga in the North to Chingleput in the South and he built a big fort and thus established himself as a powerful monarch. It was in his court that Tikkana Somayaji the "Asthana Kavi" of Cholaraja in Nellore read, for the first time, his 15 Parvas of Mahabharata at Warangal where the Kakatiya capital had been shifted from Hanamkonda

Ganapati Deva Maharaja reigned supreme for many years and spread peace and prosperity all over the land.

He had no sons. After him his only daughter Rudrama Devi became the ruler of this great Empire. She was not only a fair ruler, but full of courage and strength. She was hailed by her people as the Jhansi Lakshmi of the Andhra. She was a loving and popular monarch. Her grandson, Pratapa Rudra Deva Maharaja succeeded to the throne and he, in his turn, extended his territory as far as Tanjore and Trichinapally in the South.

The Delhi rulers were all the time keeping an eye on Warangal and its ruler. Many a time the Sultan's army tried to invade the Telugu territory but was driven out. But ultimately in 1323 there was a long drawn-out battle where unfortunately Pratapa Rudra Deva became a captive of the Delhi Sultan. He killed himself preferring death to disgrace. Andhra came under the rule of the Delhi Sultans.

All that Ganapati Deva and Rani Rudrama Devi and her grandson had done, including the great palace that was built, were reduced to utter ruins by the Delhi Sultans during their invasions.

But by 1335 again better days had dawned on the Andhras for Hari Hararayalu and his brother Bukkarayalu established an independent Telugu Kingdom in Rayalaseema with Vijayanagaram as their capital. In course of time the entire Andhra territory was rescued from the Muslims, but independent small kingdoms were set up, like the Vema Reddi kingdom in Addanki, that of Rachakonda in Telangana, instead of a consolidated empire, as there was under the Kakatiya dynasty.

Once again under these small independent kingdoms there were developments in many fields of life. The Reddi kings took great interest in Fine Arts. Some of them were masters of Sanskrit and Telugu language. Komaragiri Reddi, for instance, wrote in Sanskrit "Vasantharajeeyam" a renowned work on the science of dance. Kataya Vema Reddi is another great Sanskrit Scholar. Equally a great scholar was Peda Komati Vema Reddi. Almost all Reddi kings showed unusual interest in every aspect of study and life. There were masters in Music, Literature, Ayurveda, Astrology, Shipping and other sciences.

The great poets Eriapragada and Srinadha were contemporaries of Reddi kings.

Similarly the Rachakonda kings too were enthusiasts of culture and civilisation. They helped towards the promotion of Fine Arts. Kumara Anavethanadu was a great Sanskrit Scholar. There are many great volumes to his credit. Srinadha has made special mention of king Singa Maha Bhupala in his work. Another great poet who was his contemporary and close relation was Pothanna whose Bhagavatham is the Bible of every Hindu Telugu home.

Of these small kingdoms the kings of Vijayanagaram were the most famous. After the death of Veera Narasimha Rayalu, his brother Sri Krishna Devarayalu ascended the throne. His kingdom not only flourished during his time in every way but was extended in the south as far as Tanjore and Madura. His representatives were ruling these areas. He as a ruler was not only a valarous person but was a distinguished scholar given to literature, particularly to poetry. He encouraged poets and established what was known as the Bhuvana Vijayam in which there was the "Ashta Diggajulu", eight famous poets of the day who sat in the court. Dance, Drama, Music, Architechure, Pain-ting and Sculpture flourished and the Telugu land once again blossomed into a glorious kingdom.

As for trade and commerce they were prosperous too. All religions were treated alike. Vijayanagaram, the capital seemed at the time a model city with all conveniences and comforts. Vaishnava religion was the leading one.

After the downfall of Vijayanagaram, Golkonda was the next place where the Telugu people prospered. Although the Muslims ruled the region, the Telugu speaking people being in the majorty, were indirectly making history. Ibrahim Kuli Kutub Shah and after him, Mohammed Kuli Kutub Shah ruled over Golkonda and extended their territory to Rayalaseema. In 1550 the Golkonda rulers have been bringing about a kind of unity which was consolidating the Andhra regions. Both these Kuli Kutub Shahs had done much for the welfare of the people in their kingdom. They built the city of Bhagyanagar which is our modern Hyderabad. In the time of Abdullah Kutub Shah the Golkonda kingdom spread as far as Ganjam. The last of the Golkonda kings was the famous Abdul Hasan Kutub Shah, popularly known as Tanisha, who came to the throne in 1672. His two important officers, the Chief Minister and the Commander-in-Chief of the army, both were Telugu men, Madanna and Akkanna. The story of Bhakta Gopanna, the Tehsildar who built the Bhadrachalam Temple is a popular story of the Andhras.

Golkonda brought perfect integration. There was unity between the Muslims and the Hindus. They were together running the state although the Muslims were the monarchs. The Kuli Kutub Shah kings were particularly sympathetic to all the Hindus. They were friendly with all. On the whole the Government was loved by every one. They encouraged arts and sciences. They gave prominence in their courts to Telugu poets and authors. They encouraged poetry and literature and honoured Telugu poets and Pandits.

There were some well known poets of the day such as Adda ki Gargachar, Ponnakanti Telangana, Kandukuri Rudra.

By 1687 Aurangzeb pillaged and plundered the lovely State of Golkonda and imprisoned many important people and took possession of the State. When he established himself as the king, he did not very much approve of the friendliness that existed between the Hindus and the Muslims.

In 1724 Chin Kilik Khan alias Asaf Jah Nizamul Mulk marched with his army against the Delhi Emperor and defeated him and with the victory he established himself independent in the Deccan and began to rule on his own. He made Hyderabad his capital. The whole of Andhra had come once again under his territory.

After his death there were troublous times, which were prickling and painful. There were not only great disputes over the issue of succession, but unprecedented intrigues ruined the land. The British who were already in India, took part in this struggle with the result, the Circar Districts (East Andhra) and the Rayalaseema Districts became their possession. So Telangana with Hyderabad remained separate as Golkonda territory.

Mention has already been made about Nannaya the first and foremost poet of Andhra Pradesh.

After him we have in the beginning of 12th century Nannachodudu, a king whose main interest seemed literature. His work "Kumara Sambhavam" was regarded as the first Telugu

Prabhandam. There was Mallikarjun Pandit who wrote on Saivism which was considered very valuable by the Siva Bhaktas at a later period. In the 13th century Tikkana, the great poet wrote 5 Parvas of the Mahabharata. In the 14th century Yerra Pragada finished what Nannaya had left unfinished till the Aranya Parvam. These three great poets constitute our distinguished poets trio-Kavi trayam.

In the 14th century there was another poet named Nachana Soma whose significant work was "Uttara Hari Vamsam". With Sreenadha began the "Kavyayugam".

In the 15th century there were a pair of well known poets Nandi Mallaya and Ghanta Singana.

It was in the 16th century that Atukuri Molla wrote the Ramayana. Tallapaka Annamacharyulu's beautiful songs, full of devotion, were written during this period.

In the 17th century, in the time of Raghunatha Rayalu of Tanjore, Telugu again flourished and in his court there were very many famous poets like Chemakura Venkata Kavi, Muthu Palani and Rangajamma—the king himself was a renowned poet, who inspired others in his court and encouraged literary men and women.

A little later in our history we find great Musicians like Thyagraja and Kshetrappa, whose Music became immortal. Thyagaraja's songs are our main stay in Karnataka Music. Although a good many of his compositions were lost to us, yet the number that is handed over to posterity is not by any means small. His Bhakti-inspired Kritis are our untold asset.

The 18th century brought Vemanna to us. There is not a Telugu person who has not read Vemanna's poems. This name, on the contrary, has been a household word.

Many great men were born in Andhra in the 19th century whose services to our people cannot be overrated,—Kandukuri.

Gurazada, Gidugu whose names shine in literature as well as in the field of social reforms.

In the field of Art, Damerla Rama Rao's name has a unique place

In drama Ballari Raghava and Sthanam Narsimha Rao are names to conjure with. The parts they played and the great characters they portrayed are still remembered by admirers, who have seen them on the stage. There were others who supported art and helped people with finances and inspired them: Kalluri Subba Rao and Kashinathuni Nageshwar Rao were great lovers of art and they did so much to see that art flourished in our land.

In the field of politics, philosophy and religion there is a galaxy of great men and women. Duggirala Gopala Krishnayya, Kattamanchi Ramalinga Reddy, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan are those whom Nature had blessed with such extraordinary talent, that none could easily compete with them. Their brilliance in intellect, their articulate expression, their scintillating writings have hardly a parallel in modern times. Among these Andhras Radhakrishnan is living. He is about 86 years old. He had a string of important positions including the highest, the President of India and he has known many a rare honour, both from India and abroad.

He has been the distinguished Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford. He was the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra, Mysore and Benaras Hindu Universities. His books on Philosophy, Ethics and Religion most of which have been translated into many languages of the world. He was invited to deliver many a Western Foundation lecture in England, America, Germany and other countries. The most recent award that was conferred on him was the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. This prize of about 8 lakhs of rupees was instituted by the United States financier John Templeton. The citation said Dr. Radhakrishnan "has led to the rediscovery of the understanding of God and his special contribution to Modern Hinduism is one of the outstanding features in world religion today".

Those who played an unforgettable part in the struggle for Independence and later held responsible positions were again a good number in the Andhra Pradesh. There was Konda Venkatappiah, Pattabhi Seetharamayya, Ayyadevara Kaleshwara Rao, Burgula Ramakrishna Rao, Tanguturi Prakasam, Potti Sreeramulu, Madapati Hanumantha Rao, Gadicharla Hari Sarvothama Rao, Achanta Rukmini Devi, Durgabai Deshmukh and a host of others who fought for their land and sacrificed their all. Some of them had held high State positions and administered well.

Dr. Pattabhi was the historian of the Congress. His monumental work, the History of the Congress gives us a picture of him through his ideas. Even though it is only a record of the facts, yet the way they were represented reveal the personality of the author.

Among all the high positions he held, two stand out in bold relief. His Presidency of the Congress was a unique honour conferred on him. He was the Governor of the old Central Provinces in which capacity he did put in valuable work.

He was a grand speaker and a man of ideas. His pioneer services to cooperative societies is something that cannot easily be forgotten. He was an able and a many-splendoured personality. A medical doctor who chose the career of a politician and ended up as a good administrator.

Ayyadevara Kaleshwara Rao was a lovable personality who made no distinction of caste, creed or community. He was a thorough democrat and an unquestionable patriot. He was an author of some invaluable books. All along he was opposed to holding an office although towards the latter days of his life accepted the office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Smt. Achanta Rukmini Devi lived all along in Madras and became a Minister in the Cabinet of Composite Madras.

There was Burugu'a Ramakrishna Rao, a lawyer by profession prior to his entering the political field. He was the Chief Minister of Telangana for some years in which capacity he had done great services to the people.

He was a man of letters and a great linguist. He could speak fluently and write well in many a language such as English, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Kannada and Persian.

He was both a friendly and popular person who did not stand on formality.

One of the youngest in this line of early political leaders is Dr. Bezwada Gopala Reddy who became a minister in the Government of Composite Madras when he was hardly thirty five years old.

Educated at Tagore's Shanti Niketan Dr. Reddy has always been a lover of literature and fine arts. He has been for a number of years the Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Academy.

He has held a string of important positions such as the Chief Minister of Andhra and the Governor of Uttar Pradesh and so on.

Since his retirement he has been the Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Film Award Committee and some social service organisations

In the literary field there are a number of eminent men whose contribution to literature has been immense. There was Kommaraju Venkata Lakshmana Rao, there were the Tirupati Venkata Kavulu (poets) who astounded people with their 'Ashtavadhanamu' and 'Satavadhanamu'. They were with their inspiring and astonishing knowledge of Telugu Literature could compose wonderful poems in a moment. People just admired them for their extraordinary brilliance.

There was Chilakamarti whose prolific writings were more than enjoyed by the people.

Then there were some wonderful people like the Raja of Pithapuram, Raja Gajapati Raja of Vijayanagaram, Nayani Ranga Rao who were the preservers and promoters of art, who did help many a person who approached them either for publication of a book or setting up of a Library—any activity that would foster Fine Arts. These Rajas would help with their finances and do all that they could to promote art. They were in fact artists themselves. They were authors in their own right and hence they were attached to them.

Mention must be made of an outstanding personality whose services towards the welfare of Telangana have been immense. He was Ravichettu Ranga Rao. He and his wife Smt. Lakshmi Narasamma took pride in establishing Libraries and Schools and Social Service Centres in Telangana. Ranga Rao, in his short life of 33 years, did unforgettable service to the people.

Tapi Dharma Rao was another luminary of Andhra Pradesh. He was an original thinker and a unique writer. In the beginning he belonged to the camp of "Grandhika" but later became the follower of Gidugu and wrote many an interesting book in spoken simple Telugu. His last book was a classic, the commentary on Chemakura Venkata Kavi's Vijaya Vilasamu which brought him the Sahitya Academy award of Rs. 5000/- along with many an other honour. He passed away when he was an octogenarian.

Mention has already been made of Durgabai Deshmukh. Her outstanding work is in the field of social service. She is a self-made lady who not only educated herself and passed her M. A. in Economics in Andhra University, but did law and later devoted herself to the service of our people. Smt. Deshmukh founded the Andhra Mahila Sabha in Madras which has spread itself into the State of Andhra and it has a number of educational and social service institutions serving the cause of women.

Smt. Deshmukh has travelled extensively and collected large amounts of money for the cause of social service. The road leading to Osmania University has a cluster of modern buildings that portray silently the tireless work of Smt. Deshmukh, who dedicated her services to the cause of women. Volumes can be written about her and her work but to say in brief she is an outstanding personality with hardly a parallel in the field of Social Service in Andhra Pradesh today.

Kommireddi Suryanarayana was an asset to Kakinada and to Andhra Pradesh. He was again one who spent a good deal of his wealth in establishing libraries and schools and Music Centres at Kakinada and other places. His donations have always been princely to various deserving educational causes.

One of the very great patriots, a young man in his twenties who involved in many a battle in our State in the beginning of this century is Alluri Seetharamaraju. He was a handsome looking young man who did not make good in his studies. It is said that he had powers of Hypnotism that brought him hundreds of Koyas and other tribals as his followers. He had a soft heart for them and was all the time inclined to help the underdog. He could not stand the British Government Officers and their wreckless ways ; so he had established his own law court in the forest where he was living and became in course of time a terror to the Police in the vicinity. He attacked the Police Station and carried away their arms and protected himself and his men: but the British Police was on the look out for him after announcing an award of 10,000 rupes to one who gets Alluri. An Assamese soldier was able to locate him and as Alluri was trying to escape, he was shot.

A word must be said about an extraordinary personality in Andhra, Ravi Narayan Reddy. He was originally a member of the Congress. Later as he did not see eye to eye with some of its programmes, he left the Organisation and joined the Communists: and he was one of the most popular leaders in his time. If votes were the measuring rod for one's popularity, it is said that he got the highest number in the whole of our country.

But soon he was disillusioned as he was not in favour of violence which was a "must" with the Communists, so he left them. He did a good deal to the welfare of the people. He is one of the most sincere persons and his unimpeachable integrity made him tower among all.

There was a genius in instrumental music. The violin he played had won the hearts of not only the people of Andhra but the whole of India, for his recitals are relayed often from Delhi for the benefit of all. This was Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu. Despite his very severe handicap, for he was blind he was able to develop his music and was in his time the foremost in our country. His records even now are played often by the All Radio Station which draw numberless listeners.

In the field of Cricket there was a luminary from Andhra Pradesh who later migrated to Madhya Pradesh. This was C. K. Naidu. His extraordinary skill in the game not only brought him to the lime light but was called up by the world players to play the game. As he represented India, he put our Country on the map of the world in regard to this game. He was not only known well in our country but the whole world, recognising his ability, honoured him with titles and awards and admired his ability in the game. His brother, C. S. Naidu also showed signs of genius in this game and was well received by the Cricket world both in India and abroad.

There are some leading families in Andhra which have contributed immensely to the welfare of the State as well as the country. Some of the members have been internationally known, like Shri Rajamannar and his family. He was the chief Justice of Madras Judicature. He was also a great social reformer and a man of letters. His father, Shri Venkataramana Naidu was also the Chief Justice of Mysore High Court. His brother-in-law (sister's husband) Shri Koka Subba Rao was the Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court and later became the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. He was a brilliant jurist—A rare family of lawyers and judges indeed.

Many of our Andhras, for various personal reasons, have migrated to other states in our Country and also to other countries. Some of them have become famous. One of the distinguished sons of Andhra, whose parents went away to Nagpur about a hundred years ago, was Dr. Sir Bhavani Shankar Niyogi. He became a distinguished Chief Justice of Nagpur High Court and subsequently held a number of important positions. He was associated with a number of educational institutions in the old Central Provinces now called Maharashtra. He was the Vice-Chancellor of Nagpur University and literally there has not been an educational institution in the State that had not received his finances and blessings. He was further - A man of letters, His Report on Christian Missionary Activity is a classic although Criticised by some was appraised by intellectual press. He is one who is given to charity and helpfulness. A very kind and sympathetic person whose heart went out to the depressed and the needy. Sir Bhavani Shankar is an octogenarian living in Nagpur today.

Dr. E. Raghavendra Rao is another of the Andhras, a distinguished son - who migrated to old Central Provinces and built up an enviable career. He began life as a lawyer and an ardent member of the Congress but later joined the British as he did not approve of Non-Co-operation and other policies of the Congress. Soon he captured the political leadership of the state and became the Home Minister and later as the first Khaddar clad Governor of India. The High Court and the Women's College in Nagpur, along with many other institutions in Nagpur, owe their existence to Dr. Rao.

One of the leading educationists of the time in the last quarter of the last century was Dewan Bhadur Kidambi Ramanuja Chari who was a distinguished principal of Maharaja's College at Vijayanagaram for 33 years. He was a scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu long before he joined the Presidency College at Madras to do his M. A. The Raja of Vijayanagaram was impressed with

his scholarship, even while he was very young and with his Ash-tavadhanam, took pride in educating him in English and appointed him as the Principal of his College where he did put in excellent work. He was an author of books but he was more known for his scholarship and excellent administration of the College.

There are many distinguished men and women living today in our State. Mention must be made of Viswanadha Satyanarayana. He is an author of distinguished works in Telugu. He is a novelist, and a short story writer. He has been in some of our Universities and has headed some Colleges as Principal. He is the poet Laureate of Andhra Pradesh. Recently he was honoured with the Hindi Vidyapath Prize of a lakh of rupees for his poetic work "Ramayana Kalpa Taruvu".

Of the younger generation mention must be made of an outstanding Professor of international repute belonging to our State. This is Dr. S. Chandrasekhar whose contribution to the field of demography has been immense.

In the volume "Studies in Demography" presented to Prof: Chandrasekhar on his fifty first birthday, Sri Saradindu Sanyal says, "Few Men in Life are able to do successfully a number of things, each different from the other, and do them all equally well. This is especially true of those who want to achieve intellectual recognition in this world of specialisation. Such a person is rare because an unusual combination of gifts is required of him

"To be a distinguished researcher and scholar, a prolific writer of learned books, monographs and articles on a variety of, albeit related, subjects, an eloquent speaker, a dedicated Minister of Government, and a passionate crusader for social reform which seeks to transform the lives of millions of human beings, would seem to be beyond the capacity of a single person. But

this is Prof. Chandrasekhar, India's Minister for Health and Family Planning. Dr. Chandrasekhar is an erudite scholar with an inter-disciplinary training which enables him to feel at home in economics, sociology and statistics and as a distinguished demographer he does not mistake the wood for the trees. Widely travelled and well informed, he makes an enlightened and entertaining conversationalist who has also learned how to listen to others. A non-conformist by conviction and temperament, he is unconventional in his views, and he is not afraid to give expression to them.".....

"Through out his life Chandrasekhar has exhibited the courage of a pioneer and a crusader. He began to plead for family planning when the subject was so unpopular and unfashionable and the taboo surrounding it so great that Catholics, Communists and orthodox Hindus ceaselessly attacked him for his alleged anti-religious or bourgeois views. But Chandrasekhar persevered and his views prevailed. As the Kaufman Award citation puts it "a scientist seldom has the opportunity to translate his academic dreams into official reality but Chandrasekhar was given this opportunity on his elevation to a ministerial position". At the moment he is the Distinguished Professor of Demography at the University of California, Berkeley.

Since space is limited I have taken only those masters who are no longer with us. Even among those there are many more perhaps whose pen portraits could have been given. But I have selected only those who have been in their life time extremely outstanding, creating a kind of history that cannot easily be set aside. In this introduction I have by way of reference made mention of a few very outstanding personalities who are still living with us.

I wish to take this opportunity of heartily thanking our enthusiastic Minister for Education, the Hon'ble Shri Mandali Venkata Krishna Rao for having instituted these series under the auspices of the World Telugu Conference. I need hardly mention that these monographs, written for this occasion, will remain ever an indicator of the unique and very great event that had taken place in the history of our people in the name of the World Telugu Conference at Hyderabad – the capital of Andhra Pradesh. I am highly thankful to Dr. P. S. R. Appa Rao and Dr. Sarojini Regani for giving me this opportunity of writing this Monograph. I am indebted to Devulapalli Ramanuja Rao and Prof. K. Venkatachari for their invaluable suggestions in regard to this book. I could not have managed to write this without the great help of Dr. K. Vittal Reddy who flooded me with the necessary literature for which I am deeply grateful to him.

Kandukuri Veeresalingam

(1848 – 1919)

Foremost among the figures of the Telugu Renaissance is Veeresalingam whose pioneering efforts in widening the frontiers of Telugu letters entitle him to be called the Father of Modern Telugu Literature. With an iconoclast's zeal reminiscent of George Bernard Shaw, who was incidentally his contemporary, a rare creative genius, Veeresalingam changed the literary landscape out of all recognition through the inventive styles and modes of presentation and perception that are truly responsive to the accents of common reality.

His multifaceted genius is reflected in his prodigious writings which include not only a number of poems, but poems written in various metres, short stories, novels, dramas, humorous skits in satire known in Telugu as "prahasanas" and essays on a variety of subjects. What was said of Rabindranath Tagore could easily apply to Veeresalingam. "The diversity of his literary world is amazing. But literature in its widest sense could not exhaust his energies".

Moreover, he was a leading social reformer and was known as the Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar of the South. As V.R. Narla in his fascinating monograph on Veeresalingam says, it was easy for Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar to carry on his social reform movement in Bengal for he had master minds like Raja Rammohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen as his forerunners who had prepared the ground; whereas Veeresalingam had to plod alone as a pioneer not only in the field of social reform but on many fronts.

His genius, added to his impetuous and restless spirit, had made him fight many a battle against the orthodox and the obscurantist of the day and succeed substantially in modernising Andhradesa.

His one main object was as Dr. C. R. Reddy says, "to smite orthodoxy and bring it to the dust. Step by step he proceeded onward and forward in his resolute course of rationalism and humanism. Finally he cast away his sacred thread and with it his caste and orthodox Hinduism in which he was born. I think he called himself a Brahmo, though his Brahmoism was not an adoption of something that was born and bred outside but the straight simple evolution of his faith from within".

Veeresalingam was born in a middle class Brahmin family at Rajahmundry on April 16, 1848. His father Subbarayudu and his uncle Venkataratnam were reduced to poverty because of their father, who being a great spendthrift, lost a good bit of their ancestral property. Now the sons did not do any better, for they were not employed till they lost what little was left for them.

Subbarayudu became a clerk in Government office at Kakinada, but did not continue for long. After a brief illness he passed away leaving his only child Veeresalingam, who was just four years old, in the care of his wife Punamma, who, in her turn, had to depend on her brother-in-law, Venkataratnam, whose means were no better either. However, the latter took the responsibility of looking after Veeresalingam and his mother, Punamma.

Despite their crippling financial circumstances, the little boy Veeresalingam was sent to a couple of local schools where he finished his elementary and middle school education gaining some proficiency in Telugu. After his Middle school, Punamma was in a hurry to get her boy employed in some Government service. None could blame the poor mother, for such was her poverty-stricken condition that drove her to seek a job for her son. So she put him in the care of a relation under whom he worked and learnt English in his spare time and arithmetic

from his uncle. The hard working boy sought the help of a family friend who was a Sanskrit Scholar to teach him Sanskrit too.

Fortunately for Veeresalingam this strenuous period did not last long. Somehow his mother seemed to have changed her mind about the Government job which was a lure to many in those days and she sent him to a Government District School instead. This turned out to be a milestone in his life. For, here he had an excellent opportunity to display his brilliance. All the school prizes were his for Veeresalingam was both intelligent and industrious. Added to these was his photographic memory that stood him in good stead winning him always the first place in the school and later in life in his literary endeavours.

As early marriages were in vogue then, Punnamma got her son married when he was hardly 13 years old and the bride Rajyalakshmi was a girl of nine. This had not been a disturbance to the young boy for he had taken the event for some fun.

In spite of his excellence in studies he failed in his Matriculation Examination in which he appeared in 1968, because he had not been keeping good health. As a matter of fact Veeresalingam had been right from the beginning an ailing child who escaped twice from the jaws of death, as he says in his autobiography. He did not appear for his final examination even in the following year, as he continued to be ill. Added to his ill health, there was no peace for him at home. His mother and his aunt were constantly picking up quarrels over their property, till at last his uncle divided equally their remaining ancestral property between them. The poor uncle was absolutely heart-broken over all these unhappy developments.

He had no children of his own, He doted on Veeresalingam. Soon he died a frustrated man. Even then the family feuds did not stop. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Venkataratnam sold her share of the ancestral property and left the place. Punnamma thought that Mrs. Venkataratnam had no right over the property. So she appealed to the court and lost.

Veeresalingam says that his mother was unfortunately the first one always to pick up the quarrel and she was every time wrong in dealing with his aunt. He was pathetically helpless in this.

Now all these had told upon young Veeresalingam who could not succeed in his Matriculation Examination. He took up a position with a pleader to look after his English correspondence on a salary of Rs. 30 per month. He could not stay there for long, because the pleader had his own vulgar ways of making love to his mistress in Veeresalingam's presence which scandalised the latter so much, that he left him in disgust. This position he gave up for a better one not financially but in other ways. This time he was giving Telugu lessons to Mr. Barrow, the Headmaster of Government District High School, where he studied.

Soon he passed his Matriculation Examination after which he became the Headmaster of the English School at Korangi where he had the reputation of being an excellent teacher.

In a couple of years he changed over to another school – the Anglo – Vernacular School – at Dhavaleswaram where he worked again for two years and left for the Government Arts College at Rhjalmundry, where he was appointed the Second Telugu Pandit. It was here that he worked for a number of years and established himself as an ideal teacher.

Veeresalingam did not remain just a teacher. His long cherished ambition was to become a renowned poet. Even as a student he was writing poetry. The last of the great creative ancient poets of India was Surana. His “Kalapoornodayam” attracted and impressed him so much that he began to imitate his style in his early writings. Like any poet of those days he wrote a couple of Satakas, now lost to us as they were not printed.

He was drawn to various forms of versification which some of the early poets tried. He started composing not only in various metres, but in a specific way where certain letters are placed in a geometrical style or in a zig-zag fashion, just to show the poet's dexterity. These are called “Bandha Kavitvam” or “Ganita Kavitvam”. Similarly Veeresalingam tried his hand at

these literary acrobatics with amazing success. He also published a unique work called "Suddhandhra Niroshya Nirvachana Nai-shadham". This jaw breaking title is self-explanatory in Telugu for the story is written in pure Telugu that is to say only in words of Telugu origin without any prose passages that are off and on used even in complete Telugu poetic works in order to bring about a kind of connection or cohesiveness. Veeresalingam combined all these in this work to impress his readers.

He was even adept at what is called "Ashtavadhanam" a kind of skill where one performs eight kinds of intellectual feats including versification, which he is reported to have done a few times. All these activities constituted his early life

In his next phase, one does not find any vestiges of his early style of writing. He seems to have dropt his desire to impress pundits with his skill. A new vision appears to have dawned on him. It was during this period of his life, as he says in his autobiograpy, that he began to question the purpose of diction, the purpose of writing, the purpose of communication and answers it by saying "comprehension of the ideas conveyed in the language". So he started writing from now on in the most lucid style that was simple and pleasing at once. With it had emerged a new literature and a new philosophy. From now on literature for Veeresalingam had a different connotation. It had become a means of action and at the same time, he proved himself to be a master of letters. He became one of the greatest contemporary writers in Telugu Literature. As a matter of fact, he has the credit of being "first" in many of its forms.

In introducing satire to Telugu, he was the first and foremost. In his satires he caricatured Hindu society, and even Hindu leaders and ridiculed them for their obscurantist and out-moded ideas. He even questioned the sincerity of those who professed some reforms but shirked from practice. Writing after the style of Gulliver's Travels he wrote "Satyarajaapoorva Desa Yatralu" in which he portrays indirectly all the injustices done to women by men in picturing men under the oppressive rule of women.

He was the first one to write a novel. While the credit of being the first author of a novel in India goes to Bankim Chandra Chatterji for his "Durgeshnandini" it was Veeresalingam who wanted to translate Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*; but he felt the Indian reading public might not appreciate it, in view of its different cultural background. So he wrote his own novel called "Rajasekhara Charitra". It is similar to *Vicar of Wakefield* in that it is a social novel dealing with a middle class Andhra family living near the Godavari Valley.

In this connection it must be said that there are some critics who claim that the first novel was written by Narahari Gopala Krishna Chetty whose "Rangaraja Charitram" was published in 1872. The author was a Deputy Collector of Kurnool and the book was dedicated to Lord Mayo. It was originally thought that the story was a historically true one but later it was proved by the author himself that it was not. However, Dr. Akkiraju Ramapathi Rao has given a clear account of this in his excellent study of Veeresalingam and says since the book "Rangaraja Charitramu" was not mentioned even when a contest for novel was published in "Chintamani" and since Veeresalingam says in his autobiography that he was the first one to write a novel, it must be so.

Again it was to Veeresalingam the credit of being the "first" goes as far as the form of drama is concerned. His "Brahmo Vivaham" was serialised in his "Hasya Sanjeevani" in 1876. The story is again a satire for an old man marries a three year old girl after the death of his third wife. Here the author portrays the cruel parents who sell the bride for a thousand rupees – the rogue of an astrologer and the characterless brokers who arrange this beastly marriage were all caricatured in the play as inhuman and diabolical. This play was put on boards and proved to be quite popular.

His next play was "Vyavahara Dharma Bodhini" popularly known as the "Pleader Natakam". This brings out the low ethical standards of the legal profession of the day. Many plays followed these two in the name of farcical plays. Many mythological plays like "Dakshina Gograhana" "Prahlada"

were published. He wanted to translate in fact all Shakespeare's plays into Telugu but finding them unsuitable to Indian cultural pattern, he adapted some of them. His translation of "Shakuntala" from Kalidasa was considered the best of the many translations.

Another glorious "First" to him is the biography and autobiography. His magnum opus of autobiography in two large volumes is almost the history of himself and his times, his family and his relatives and some of his great contemporaries and his gratitude to some of his friends whose life sketches, their struggles and difficulties are all given here. His full biography of Jesus Christ, Rammohan Roy and Queen Victoria and other short biographical sketches of many great personalities had been well received.

Besides these he had taken up a monumental work - the Lives of Telugu Poets who lived till his time-beginning with Nannaya down to Gopinatham Venkata Kavi; there were 220 poets in all. This is a marvel for it had involved an abundance of research. It is said that in this work there are some errors of dates and other details which can be easily understood. Veerasingam himself admits in some context, that there might be mistakes galore in this work but it is small wonder for a prolific writer like him who was writing almost a book a month to have some errors.

Even as Paravastu Chinnaya Suri, he had not left out Vighraha Tantra and Sandhi. He had translated these from Sanskrit into Telugu.

Over and above all these, he dared to write on subjects which no one unless specialised could indulge e. g. physiology and astronomy. His book on physiology, was prescribed as a School Text Book for years and ran into a good few editions.

Veerasingam also indulged in writing children's books, women's books and grammar. No one in recent times had done so much of prolific writing.

As I have said earlier, most of his later writings were used as a means of action - social reform.

Veeresalingam had to work hard these days single-handed to root out superstition, belief in ghosts and what have you. In his satires, dramas and stories he had brought human limitations and graphically described the outmoded customs in which still Telugu people believed in. He wanted women to be given equal rights with men, to be educated and to be treated fairly and justly. He condemned child marriages which were so highly prevalent then and made fun of old men marrying little girls. He wanted child widows, as a matter of fact, all widows if they desired, to remarry even as men did. It is this that brought him many enemies from the orthodox, particularly the Brahmins. His sense of justice, equality and humanitarian feeling protested against these social evils and he strove hard to eliminate them from society.

He established a Widows Home at Rajahmundry and one at Madras. He performed a number of widow marriages at Rajahmundry, Madras and other places in Andhra. This was indeed outrageous to the reactionaries. He established schools for girls at Rajahmundry, built many Halls for prayers, not that he believed in them in the old orthodox way. But he was a theist and was the local President of the Prarthana Samaj of Justice Ranade's. Seeing the poor condition of the Brahma Samaj building at Madras, he built a decent one in Madras and donated it to Brahma Samaj, a Prayer Hall at Bangalore, a Town Hall, a Rescue Home, a Women's Prayer Association at Rajahmundry. For all these he spent his own money that was pouring in during the later part of his life from the sale of his books. His spirit of sacrifice and selflessness was inspiring others like the Rajah of Pithapuram and others to send him princely donations from time to time for his various worthy causes.

Unfortunately many did not understand the meaning of his activities, so he had not only a stout opposition but actual enemies who wanted to see the end of him. He withstood bravely opposition, ridicule, calumny, social boycott and persecution. Even some leading men of letters like Kokkonda Venkataratnam and Vedam Venkataraya Shastri were constantly

criticising him. Some even threatened to burn his house. Some intimidated to kill him. It must be said here that some of his loyal and admiring students guarded his house and protected him. One can easily imagine what a tremendous task it must have been for him to fight back this opposition. But he fought courageously and went ahead with his programmes. His rationalism, his humanism and his spirit of grim determination would not permit him to take the opposition lying low. Nothing seemed to deter him from his one purpose of social reform for his people and leading Andhradesa to progressive modernism.

As Dr. C. R. Reddy says, "think of it, can you imagine a poor ordinary Telugu pandit becoming a hero of a people, its fighting leader and pioneer in the most difficult of all fields - social reform? ever heard of a Sanskrit pandit, Tamil pandit, Kannada Pandit, Malayalam Pandit or any other Pandit being anything more than a secluded and neglected cultural influence, and in the class room a butt for the boisterous spirit of the boys? A Pandit fighting orthodoxy and in the days when India was far less modern than now and isolated from foreign liberal contacts. The times were against him but he fought the times; a David against Goliath and won".

Now turning to Veeresalingam's career - he took leave from the Arts College, Rajahmundry and went to Madras to stay for sometime for he had planned ahead and built a house and established his printing press and published his "Poets' Lives" and other of his works. It is said that he published ten volumes in the period of two years and was at the same time, he was very active with his reform work.

It must be said here, that his sincere services were being recognised for honours were being showered on him not by his enemies, for the enemies continued to remain in fact became more in number! It was the general public who gave him the title of Gadya Tikkana. All India leaders and social reformers like

Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahadeva Govinda Ranade, Maharshi Dr. Karve were corresponding with him and were appreciating his work. He was asked to preside over many an all India conference such as the Indian Social Reform Conference in 1898 that met along with the Indian National Congress at Madras. He was elected President of the National Theistic Conference held at Madras in 1899. It was during this period the Government, appreciating his work, conferred the title of Rao Bahadur on him. The Government Education Department invited him to take up the post of the First Telugu pandit at the Presidency College, Madras which he accepted to the annoyance of Kokkonda who thought that his place was given to Veeresalingam for the former was transferred to Rajahmundry Arts College. As it was, Kokkonda was his main critic and this untoward event confirmed in his belief that Veeresalingam manipulated with the Director of Public Instruction and got this done, although this was far from the truth.

Soon Veerasalingam retired from his teaching position and returned to Rajahmundry where once again he continued his social reform activities.

One has to marvel at his abundant energy now in his fresh set of activities. He started a new Girls High School, a new Weekly and an Orphanage. It was at this time, the "Hitakarini Samaj" was founded in 1906 for which he gave away a substantial amount of Rs. 41,500.

All these must have made him completely fagged out. He was indisposed for a few weeks, when he thought he could travel instead of resting which was absolutely alien to him. He went to Calcutta with his wife and was greatly honoured. He was the guest of the Brahma Samaj. From there he went to Bangalore, Mysore, Kolar and Siva Samudram. Then they went to Secunderabad where they were the guests of Major Govindarajulu Naidu and Sarojini Devi at whose marriage, years ago, he was the High Priest. He was collecting funds for "Hitakarini Samaj" and

wherever he went he found people honouring him and giving him donations too.

In 1910 he lost his wife Rajyalakshammamma who passed away in her sleep. It was a great blow to him. This calamity told upon him very severely. He literally lost his interest in his work and life as he says. His bereavement had made him lonely and miserable. He survived his wife by nine years. He had written his two volumes of his autobiography till 1913, but somehow he did not feel like continuing it. In the summer of 1919 while he was the guest of Kommaraju Venkata Lakshmana Rao, the pioneer of Telugu Encyclopaedia and the founder of the famous Vignana Chandrika Grandha Mandali at Madras, Veeresalingam was encouraged by Lakshman Rao to take up the third part of his autobiography which he had begun and had written about 45 pages. On May 27, 1919 all of a sudden Veeresalingam fell ill and his pen fell down while writing – seems significant for an author like him. He breathed his last leaving the country and Andhradesa in particular to mourn his loss.

Thus ended the life of a great literary revolutionary who struggled hard and faced opposition, fought orthodoxy and introduced many a social reform particularly in respect of the emancipation of women. His abundant, Immortal writings, specially those of his later days, were all directed towards pulling out Andhra from the grooves of ignorance and superstition it had settled, in order that it might take its place in the march of progress.

Bharat Ratna Mokshagundam Visveswarayya

(1861 – 1961)

Few in our time have stirred the imagination of our people as much as Visveswarayya, whose achievements have an aura of the marvellous that has inspired and instilled a new self-confidence in them. Engineer by training, administrator by profession and humanist by temperament, Visveswarayya had an astonishing career punctuated by great distinction and honour including the highest that his grateful people could confer on him, Bharat Ratna. He lived up to an age and attained a pinnacle of fame that few could even aspire to in a single life time.

His life was indeed a dream translated into an incredible reality. It is no wonder that Pandit Nehru who specially came down to Bangalore to participate in the celebration of his hundredth birthday asked him, "How can we honour you, Sir, your life is full of many honours, as your life is full of dreams, thoughts and achievements; you have been a dreamer, thinker and man of action. And so you have lived an integrated life bringing into existence and giving shape to your dreams—dreams not for yourself but for India and the people of India. And so the Country is full of memorials of the work done by you in the past, of your own achievements here in this city of Bangalore". In concluding his brilliant address of eulogy Panditji said, "Your hundred years have done something to bring about the dreams of the future not merely the achievements of the past. So we greet you, and in greeting you, if we are to be true to ourselves, we should take a pledge to do whatever in our capacity to live up

to your dreams, and tread the way you have shown us. Only then, do we really honour and respect you”.

Visveswarayya was one of our very great engineers, industrialists, administrators and statesman who gave of their very best to the country. One of his biographers says, “He was an Engineering-Wizard, perhaps the greatest engineer that India had produced”.

Visveswarayya was born in Muddenhalli village in Kolar district about 40 miles from Bangalore on the 15th September 1861. He had his schooling in Chikballapur which was about three miles from his village. Visveswarayya's house - name, Mokshagundam, is the name of a village in Kurnool District from where his forefathers had originally hailed before migrating to Mysore.

Visveswarayya's father, Sreenivasachary was a Sanskrit scholar and a deeply religious person who was given to a good deal of travelling - mainly pilgrimages. When he was on one such trip returning from Banaras to Mysore, he took suddenly ill at Raichur where he passed away.

Young Visveswarayya, therefore, had to depend upon his uncle, Ramaiyya who, though not in very opulent circumstances looked after his nephew with great care and affection. In Chikbellapur itself, the young boy had made a deep impression on his teachers with his industry and intelligence. Later, when he joined the Central College High School at Bangalore, he had better opportunities of displaying his brilliance in studies. For the principal of his school, Charles Waters, who thought very highly of the boy, described him as a “capital mathematician and a very good English scholar”.

Visveswarayya passed his Matriculation in 1867 and B.A. from the Madras University in 1880 as Central College was then affiliated to Madras University. He was first among all the successful candidates and won the much coveted scholarship for Higher Studies outside the State in Poona.

Visveswarayya proceeded to Poona and joined the Science College, which later came to be known as the College of Engineering. Here again his close contact with eminent professors like Dr. Sir Theodore Cooke and Professor Samuel Cooke helped him a good deal.

After a period of two and a half years he passed his Licentiate in Civil Engineering Examination in 1886 in first class again winning another award – the James Berkeley Prize. The student who topped the list of engineering graduates in Bombay University was invariably appointed an assistant engineer. Accordingly Visveswarayya joined the Public Works Department of the Government of Bombay in 1884 as an Assistant Engineer when he was hardly twenty-three years old.

Young Visveswarayya as an Executive Engineer of Poona Irrigation District, Bombay Presidency, now Maharashtra, introduced for the first time, a unique system of irrigation by which there could be economic and rational distribution of waters from the irrigation canals in the Deccan called the Block System of Irrigation. Before introducing this system, his evidence before the Indian Irrigation Commission (1901–1903), appointed by Lord Curzon, was considered highly original and supremely practicable. Many distinguished Engineers in India were also invited to give evidence before the Commission. The members were so impressed with young Visveswarayya that they immediately asked him to put his project into effect. The system had worked for about four years when Sir John M. Mackenzie, Senior member of the Government of Bombay, spoke of the results of the System at a Session of the Bombay Legislative Council in Poona thus :

“The Block System of Irrigation on the Nira Canal has succeeded in paying $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ on the capital outlay and we hope to see it paying 5%. The development of this system was due entirely to the genius of Visveswarayya, certainly one of the ablest officers, European or Indian, of the Public Works Department by making the scheme a remunerative one, evidence

of which can be found in the prosperous peasantry of the canal areas and the luxuriant crops grown on their lands, besides preventing water-logging to which irrigated lands are generally susceptible”.

The success of this system made the Government introduce it in other parts of India ; and some other countries also have introduced it with success in their lands.

After twenty-four years of service Visveswarayya retired on his own accord when he was Superintending Engineer.

During his service as an Engineer and after his early retirement he made many a contribution in the field of engineering that was unique and outstanding which spoke of his genius in Mathematics and Engineering.

To mention some of his skilful engineering innovations - he designed a new system of automatic waste weir flood gates. These were installed for the first time in 1901-1903 on the Khadakvasla Reservoir at Poona, also known as Lake Fife. The object of these gates “was to raise the flood supply level of storage in the reservoir to the highest level likely to be attained by its flood, without causing any danger to the Dam”. Similar gates were installed later, on the Tigara Dam at Gwalior and the Krishnaraja Sagar Dam at Mysore. Visveswarayya had obtained a patent for this, but refused to claim any royalty from the Government.

Lord Kitchener who was the Commander-in-Chief of India then and the Governor of Bombay Lord Sydenham saw these unique gates at work and were deeply impressed.

A little prior to his retirement, during his preparatory leave, Visveswarayya had gone on a tour of America, when he suddenly received a cable from the Governor of Bombay requesting him to take up a special assignment in Hyderabad where there were appalling floods in the river Musi that runs through the Capital. Visveswarayya arrived in Hyderabad on

the 15th April 1909 and was in service until November 1909. He was asked to furnish schemes both for flood protection as well as a modern sewerage for the city which he submitted before he left for Mysore where he was appointed Chief Engineer.

For 9 years he held this position and became a Consulting Engineer of all India level thereafter.

Again the Government of Hyderabad invited Visveswarayya in 1922 to advise on the Drainage Scheme, the construction of which was not progressing satisfactorily. He paid several visits to the city and helped towards the required construction. The Government in this connection requested him to give a full report of the city's deficiencies and remedial measures and improvements. Visveswarayya's Report on this is deemed even today to be a regular classic.

It is interesting to note, the Report described the Musi River flood as one of the highest and the most disastrous in the world, that had occurred in Hyderabad for at least three quarters of a century. Visveswarayya says further "There is no record of a run-off of 3/4 inches per hour from any other catchment of this size in the world".

To mention another of his engineering feats, the Development of the Cauvery Falls Power Scheme in Mysore is a fascinating story of how Visveswarayya succeeded when a number of other engineers failed.

A proposal was made to build a reservoir at the village Kanambadi in the vicinity of ten miles to Seringapatam. The construction of a reservoir for irrigation across the river Cauvery had been taken up as early as 1870. Many schemes were drawn up, but shelved for want of adequate finances. In 1902 the Mysore Government had started the Hydro-Electric Scheme at Sivasamudram for supplying power to the Kolar gold fields. In course of time, it was found that the demand for power increased very rapidly necessitating an increase in power installation. For this, large amounts of

money were required ; so in 1908 fresh attempts were made to take up the project for a reservoir across the Cauvery in order to increase the supply for power and also this time to enable the generation of additional electric power required by the mines and for meeting the ever increasing demand for industrial purposes.

Visveswarayya was asked to draw up schemes for this. He took no time to do so, as his experience was wide and his interest was unabating. But in the meantime State intrigues had developed and His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore was advised by some of his sychophants not to spend such large amounts of money. So the scheme was shelved. Visveswarayya felt that he might not be able to influence His Highness the Maharaja. So he thought of retiring from the State Service. He took leave of absence for a short while and left the place for North India.

On his return things were no better and so he remained aloof while managing the routine work. One day His Highness sent for him and asked him about his indifference. When Visveswarayya gave details of the schemes drawn up, the Maharaja promised to sanction the finances and asked him to proceed with the schemes. The capital that was invested in all these was 10½ crores of rupees. The direct and indirect benefits accruing from these were estimated at Rs. 15 crores a year which was, indeed, a grand record for the State. The Krishnaraja Sagar Reservoir project including Brindavan Gardens at Mysore designed and built by Visveswarayya is yet another marvel of engineering created by him.

Besides this, the Mysore Iron and Steel Works at Bhadravati designed and constructed by Visveswarayya stands as a monument to his technical brilliance. Here again he had to face a good deal of criticism that he was spending colossal amounts of State money for which there might not be adequate

returns. He was once again tempted to retire from his work but Sir Mirza Ismail, who was then the Secretary to His Highness the Maharajah, and His Highness had prevailed upon him to continue his invaluable work. Visveswarayya laboured hard for six and a half years and completed this work at a much less cost than was originally estimated by the American expert Mr. Charles Page Perin, who had earlier advised the closure of the works. He, later, was astonished at the completion of the works and sent a cable to Visveswarayya congratulating him and observing that it would not have been possible had it not been for him.

Sir Mirza Ismail in his autobiography, "My Public Life" had this to say about Visveswarayya, "Sri M. Visveswarayya, Late Chief Engineer, P. W. D. became Dewan of Mysore, an office he held for six years with great distinction to himself and profit to the State. He had been responsible for the construction of the Reservoir across the Cauvery, eleven miles from Mysore city and five miles above Seringapatam at a cost of over Rs. 2 crores. Krishnaraja Sagar, as the lake is called, was at that time the biggest reservoir in India. The iron works at Bhadravati also owe their existence to him. These two works have been of enormous benefit to the State and are a standing monument to his wisdom and fore-sight. There is much also for which Mysore is indebted to him."

A large sum of money was due to Visveswarayya from the Government of Mysore as fees for his invaluable work for 6½ years as the Chairman of the Board of Management for the Cauvery Reservoir and the Bhadravati Iron Works, but Visveswarayya declined to accept it. However, when the Government insisted on making payments, he accepted it which amounted to Rs. 1,50,000 and requested the Government to establish an Occupational Institute at Bangalore with it as a nucleus. At his suggestion it is called now Sri Jaya Chamarajendra Occupational Institute.

In 1912 Visveswarayya became the Dewan of Mysore. He held that office for six years with distinction and later he himself resigned from the office. His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore was so highly pleased with his record of service that he said, "During all this period Sri M. Visveswarayya laboured with unwearing zeal and single-minded devotion to increase the material resources of the State. His administration as Dewan has resulted in important and far reaching developments in Education, Irrigation works, Railway, Communications and Industries and has laid the foundations for a prosperous and progressive future for the State. Sri M. Visveswarayya carries with him in his retirement the esteem and best wishes of His Highness the Maharaja and all classes of his subjects".

After his retirement too, he began to give all his energy and time to many other problems of the State.

He was interested in Education. The question of Higher Education received his attention. He worked hard towards the establishment of the University in Mysore. It was the first University in a Princely State in India.

Another interesting feature in which he got deeply absorbed was the desire to establish an automobile industry in Mysore. When he was abroad touring U.S.A., and Europe he visited automobile industries such as the Ford Company and Chrysler Corporation in U.S.A. and the Fiat Company in Italy. He personally met Henry Ford and other big businessmen. Chrysler Corporation was willing to help Visveswarayya in the construction of the Project and provide all facilities. On returning home Visveswarayya's report and the project were published twice in India. As a result of this Report and his personal appeals in 1939 the Congress Government which had by then come to power in Bombay, gave some concessions to start an automobile plant in Bombay. Hirachand Walchand and his associates who were rich and leading businessmen and engineering and Railway Contractors immediately took a trip to U.S.A. and Europe along with the Director of Industries in Bombay, Mr. Advan,

who was put on special duty to help Walchand and met the concerned automobile businessmen and collected all information and wanted to establish the plant in Bombay. They spent some weeks with the engineers of the Ford Company and carried out investigation of the technical and economic aspects of an automobile plant for India.

But ultimately nothing came of it, as the Government of India were not totally in favour of the scheme. Sir Mirza Ismail was in support of the Scheme drawn up by Visveswarayya. But when the scheme was dropped, he was so frustrated and dejected and as a protest against the decision of the Government of India, he tendered resignation of his high office. How depressed people got can be seen in his statement. "The sabotage of this scheme even in Mysore therefore left no doubt about the intentions of the Government of India to hamper the growth of heavy industries in India and the only conclusion that was inevitably forced upon the people was that that the Government of India's chief and only concern was to carry out the behests of the non-Indian industrialists who desired that India should ever remain in economic bondage to them, so that they could exploit the vast resources of the country as exclusively in the future, as they had done in the past".

Once again with the support and influence of Visveswarayya, Hirachand Walchand pursued the matter but this time succeeded in getting the Mysore Government interested in establishing an aircraft industry, under the joint aegis of the two Governments viz. Bombay and Mysore. Thanks to Visveswarayya, they were able to set up at least this industry in Bangalore, under the name of Hindustan Aircraft, despite many obstacles. The capital for this was met ultimately by the Government of India and Mysore and Hirachand Walchand and his Associates in 1942. The Hindustan Aircraft Factory is the sole manufacturer of modern aircraft in India.

In 1937, when there were floods in Orissa, Mahatma Gandhi requested Visveswarayya to give his expert advice. The

latter visited Orissa and studied the case in detail by obtaining particulars for each river in Orissa. He suggested the formation of a Committee of local engineers for consultation and finally with the collected data, he advised to build three dams, one below the other, which while affording protection against floods would also provide generation of electric power and the irrigation of large areas of land in the State. One dam, the Hirakud has been constructed. His idea of diverting the highest floods from the main river to the lake was considered as an extraordinary suggestion that finally helped to control the floods in Orissa.

Numberless were the projects that Visveswarayya established not only in Mysore, his home State, but all over India. After his retirement from service in Mysore he was a National Consultant in which capacity, he had helped to solve many a mighty engineering problem in our country.

Recognising his genius many universities conferred honoris causa degrees like D. Sc. and D. Litt. on him. He was asked to address many a gathering and his invaluable speeches which mark liberality and sound advice to youth for the betterment of their country could run into volumes.

He was a distinguished author too. His "Reconstructing India" and "Planned Economy for India" are classic examples of practising tenets which he preached.

More and more honours came to him. In 1911 he was given the title of C. I. E. at the Delhi Durbar as an Engineer of Distinction. Later in 1915 he was knighted having been made K. C. I. E. (Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire).

The highest honour came from the Government of India in 1955 when he was awarded the most exalted title of "Bharat Ratna" (the Jewel of India).

He was elected an associating member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London in 1887. After 50 years of his membership the Institution wrote to him and said that in view of their esteem and regard and his long and valued connection with the Institution, the Council had decided that his name would be retained on the rolls of the Institute without any payment of annual subscription. Many institutions in India enrolled him as an honorary member, in admiration of his brilliant mind and in gratitude for his great services. Soon after his centenary celebrations' he passed away. In him the country has lost a sincere patriot and a pre-eminently constructive genius. The Institution of Engineers of India erected a bronze statue of Visveswarayya at Hyderabad in 1966.

His genius in engineering and other skills apart, Visveswarayya's personal life, as one of his biographers, Dildar Hussain, says, "was an object of study in elegance, integrity, austerity and discipline. He had a healthy body and healthy mind. His missionary zeal helped him to brush aside set-backs in life with an amused tolerance".

"The architect of many a housing scheme, he had no house of his own. He had been living until the end of his life with his nephew Prof. Krishnamurthy and his wife and two grand children who were the source of his delight and amusement".

His brilliant life stresses on two important traits-sincere hard work and integrity of character which he practised to his utmost.

His life resplendent with such grand achievements that they were not only beneficial to humanity then, but even long after his death, their utility is being enjoyed and his name is ever green in our memory. "There are some great persons whose greatness is understood in their life time and they are honoured accordingly. But "there are some men of eminence" as one of

his biographers says, "whose greatness is not understood during their life time. It is realised years after they are gone. It was to this class of men that Dr. Visveswarayya belonged, an engineering scientist, an inventor, an industrialist, an economic planner, a scientific advisor and a statesman". The wide range of his talents that are reflected in his monumental works will make generations of posterity admire and remember him with love and gratitude.

Gurazada Apparao

(1862 – 1915)

Gurazada Apparao is one of those who exemplified Shelly's dictum that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world". With his stylistic dynamism and revolutionary fervour he created works of literary art out of the dialectical conflicts that raged within him and without. He is indeed one of those who are a part of the consciousness of his age and whose work seems impoverished if considered in isolation without relating it to its historical context.

"The story of Gurazada Apparao is our story of our Telugu people, our language, our literature and our culture". So begins Devulapalli Prabhakara Rao his lovely monograph on Gurazada Apparao called "Mahakavi Gurazada".

Gurazada Apparao has been one of our outstanding personalities and poets of Andhradesa whose revolutionary ideas had awakened its people and made them sit up and think. He was not one of those who wrote poems for the fun of it, would compose on any subject. Everything that he had written has had deep meaning and a grand purpose. Not that that other poets do not have a purpose in writing but Gurazada has a specific purpose and a message.

Gurazada's revolutionary activity in poetry was such that even as Tagore, he was almost the first one to have rescued Telugu poetry from its strict metre considerations. He put the highest premium on ideas rather than on prosodic considerations.

He was again the first one to have composed in the simple accents of the common Telugu speech. As for his ideas they were as alive and democratic as his immortal words. He was the originator of modern ideas and modern poetry. Even in his modernness there is something unique in it. Later we find poets like Sri Sri following his footsteps in the nature of poetry and in democratic modern ideas.

Apparao was born in the year 1862. This year seems an auspicious one for in this very year was born Pandit Motilal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore.

His family name was Gurazada, the name of the little village where his forbears lived. This is somewhere near Ganavaram in Krishna District. He hails from a family of Pandits.

That was a period when India had just failed in her first attempt to win independence; that was the time of the war of Independence in 1857. She was still smarting under the wounds and Queen Victoria had taken over the rule of India directly under her. The East India Company had ceased to have its sway.

The spirit of Nationalism in the people was roused and in Andhra, Kandukuri Veeresalingam had started his social reform movement whereby he had been condemning child-marriages. He was fighting against superstition and ignorance among the people.

These evils and the existing beliefs were beautifully and humorously portrayed by Apparao in the language of the people in his book Kanya Sulkam (the bride price). Every literate person enjoyed reading it and it had become so popular that it was staged in various cities of Andhradesa, ever so many times.

Apparao was an voracious reader. He was all the time searching for books and pouring forth pages of various kinds of books.

His early schooling years were in a village and he had started learning all three languages there - English, Telugu and Sanskrit. Later when he was hardly seven years old, he joined the Vijayanagaram Secondary School. It was here that he met Gidugu Venkata Rammooorthy and it will be seen in later years that both had joined together in many a movement towards the welfare of our people and their language, Telugu.

Later in 1872 he joined the Maharaja's College where he pursued a literary career. His studies apart when he was in his Matriculation class, he wrote a poem in English which was read by the Inspector of Schools who really admired the boy's talent and in his turn read this poem to Maharaja Ananda Gajapati, the Ruler of Vijayanagaram who equally appreciated it.

The Principal of the College, Chandrasekhara Shastri was not only impressed with the poem but was happily inclined towards the boy's general attitude and he took the boy under his care and started giving special lessons to him. The Principal on one occasion had this to say :

Apparao was one of the most brilliant students who as a student had won the appreciation and regard of his teachers. His one weakness was his deep attachment to poetry. His poetic talent was extraordinary. With practice it will shine and help Apparao to get the highest memorable place among the poets. His humble nature and goodness are his natural characteristics for he seemed to have been born with humility and goodness

He passed his Matriculation Examination in first class and he wanted to become a lawyer. Those days it could be seen that every famous person was invariably a lawyer. But financial difficulties stood in his way and prevented him from realising his ambition. Even before he could complete his studies he had to accept a job in a High School in 1884 as a teacher on a salary of Rs. 25 per month to support himself.

Even as a student in Intermediate class, he had great ideas and dreamed of many things. As a matter of fact he wrote "Sarangadhara" in a long poem and it was published in an English newspaper. Later an editor, one Venkataramanayya, sent it to the Editor, Shambhu Chandra Mukherji to be published in his journal called "The Mukherji Magazine" which was then one of the leading English Journals of which even the Governor was scared of its criticism.

The editor himself was a well-known person Mukherji after reading this long story poem wrote and said that it was a very good one and he was publishing it in his Magazine along with his bio-data, so that his readers would know more about him,

So Apparao and Mukherji were corresponding not only on his writings, but the latter was keen on knowing about the Social Reform Movements in Andhra, whether the Andhras were taken up by the new reform movements or still in the dark. He also advised him to continue to write poetry and in different metres and different styles and on different subjects too. As a matter of fact Apparao wanted to write a political story of poems ; one does not know whether he had written this or not.

While he was teaching in 1886, he passed his B.A. in first class with philosophy and Sanskrit as his subjects. In order to improve his position financially he gave up teaching and joined as a Head Clerk in a Collectorate's Office. Even this he discovered in course of time, that he did not like it.

Soon as luck would have it, Maharaja Anandagajapati appointed him an Assistant Lecturer in his College at Vijayanagaram, knowing fully well that he was wasting his talent in the Collectorate Office. This has been a milestone in his life. For he had known such difficult days—full of financial stress and strain looking after his whole family with a meagre salary that was so inadequate. He writes to say how lovely it would be to be without worries getting up in the morning with no fear and frustration.

Now he had peace. He had not to worry about the morrow. He was earning 100 Rupees per month and it was a pleasure to teach F.A. and B.A. students subjects which were delightful to him. He was teaching as a matter of fact a number of subjects, such as English, Philosophy, History of Literature, Sanskrit, Translation, Grammar, Greek and Roman History. These were his happy days. After his college hours he would read newspapers to the Raja for which he was paid Rs. 50 from Raja's private funds and day by day his friendship with the Raja was growing. In 1891 he was promoted to the Third Lecturer from the Fourth with an increment of 25 rupees.

It was at this time Apparao married Appalanarasamma.

He taught in the College for about 9 years from 1887 – 1896. This was the most important period in his life. While he was teaching, he had opportunities of doing a good bit of reading. It was at this time he developed himself as a good speaker and writer. His love of research gave him an opportunity now. Nevertheless he was not satisfied with his own studies limited to Indian experience. He was reading scholarly works from other countries and making a study of them. There were a galaxy of talented young men in the Court of Maharaja Anandagajapati and it was not easy for Apparao to top them all. He was friendly with scholars in other fields. He was a sincere companion to Gidugu Rammoorthy, and made friends with Srinivasa Iyyengar, Advocate General of Madras at the time. The latter was a Shakespearean Scholar. Y.A. Yates, Principal of Pachayappas College was his close friend. There was Vedam Venkataraya Shastri a foremost scholar in Telugu, who was well known to him.

In the court of Anandagajapati, a debating club was established for which Apparao was made the Vice President. There used to be many a discussion on various subjects and the Raja was more inclined towards literary pursuits than reigning his area! In all these Apparao participated and every one appreciated his speeches, as they were considered the best.

Apparao had an opportunity of travelling with the Raja to various cities in India. This had added to his experience, meeting many people and exchanging ideas with them.

Apparao unlike many others was given to a good deal of thinking on various matters. He himself says how he was in the habit of thinking and ruminating about ideas all the time. In fact this was making him weak and he was frightened that this might lead to ill health.

He was a natural philosopher. His philosophy was not the result of mere reading books on Philosophy. It had a practical side too, for he was constantly examining, analysing and conducting a kind of introspective research on men and matters which resulted in his own comprehension of people; and this was a great asset by itself for if one understands, there is no misunderstanding at all, for it was misunderstanding that causes various problems in life.

His deep and intricate thinking has been revealed in his writings. For instance once he analyses how man falls a victim to his own temper. Anger is one's own enemy as Vemanna had said long ago and it could ruin him, if he were not on his guard; for if untoward circumstances prevail over his life, temper could become better of the self and would lead him to unknown troubles. Such thoughts dominated him at all levels of his consciousness.

Hard work in this period made him achieve many a glorious thing. But he was not a very strong and healthy person to begin with. And perseverance added to serious thinking was making him feel very weak and he was losing weight. He found it very difficult even to go to the college and deliver his lectures in the class room.

Readings from his diary illustrate what a kind and gentle-hearted person Apparao was. He was moved greatly to other's sufferings. For instance, seeing Gidugu, his friend, crying over the demise of his father when he was hardly fourteen years old, made Apparao weep as he could not control himself.

By 1895 his health began to deteriorate and the Raja in view of this showed great consideration and asked him to resign from the Lecturer's post. He appointed him Legal Research Scholar in his "Asthanam." This work pleased Apparao, for his heart was in research and now that an opportunity was given him, he was putting his heart and soul in research and was discovering so many new things – historical events and rare circumstances that changed the destiny of men and their countries. He was daily working for hours together in the Library at Vijayanagaram and Bangalore, and he was able to collect remarkable details pertaining to Vijayanagaram and Kalingadesa.

He was more and more becoming a part and parcel of the Court for he was receiving the Princes and other luminaries who were visiting the State and looking after them.

In 1892 the play "Kanyasulakam" was published. It was dedicated to Ananda Gajapati Raju and it was put on boards by Jagannadha Vilasini Drama company in the distinguished presence of Anandagajapati Raju. Again on the day it was given dedication, it was staged and every one enjoyed seeing it; yet it took five years to print it. The first edition itself became very popular.

In 1897 the Raja of Vijayanarayam unexpectedly passed away and this was a great tragedy in Apparao's life. He was broken hearted for, as he said, his life was so intimately associated with him that he was finding it difficult to bear this irreparable loss. Added to this, there were other troubles. His work became more intense with no respite. The Raja had no children. So his mother, Maharani Alaka Rajeshwari adopted her brother's son according to the will, but there were so many legal suits that were filed by the raja's relatives against the new adoption. These had created more work for Apparao, for he had to see to them. Small wonder, the Madras High court in its Judgement said that "Apparao is the moving spirit in the suit".

It was at this time Apparao's friend Gidugu started the movement for the spoken language to be adopted in writing and

the former Joined it heartily. With Asthan am's routine work and the legal work, Apparao was getting more tired and he was longing for rest. He did not seem to be interested in any thing but one thing. He wished he had a lot of leisure so that he could pursue his love for literature. But that was not to be, for the following years brought him one calamity after another,

Apparao's younger brother Syama Rao was like him a brilliant poet. He too was writing poetry in English even while he was very young like his brother, Apparao. He was a patriot and was interested in politics. He attended the 1889 National Congress and he wrote lovely poems on great men of the day like Hume, the founder of Indian National Congress, W. C. Banerji, a later President of the Congress, Norton, a renowned British Lawyer of the time and published them in the "Hindu"

He was like his brother corresponding with Shambhu' Chandra Mukerji who was singing his praises. He was studying law at Madras in his 18th year, when all of a sudden, he passed away. Then in the same year Apparao's dear father was drowned in floods while crossing the river. These calamities nearly killed him. As it was, his health was deteriorating and these dealt a severe blow to him.

In and through these sorrows, his pen was busy writing and his writings were symbols of modernity. He had dealt with many subjects and his research mind had made him see not only these but was deeply involved in their impact on future.

He had expressed fine sentiments on women's education, their equality and he had openly asked women to protest against old conventions and fight for equality with men.

He was unorthodox and highly courageous. The Sanathani-
nists of the day found it hard to understand his outlook.

In 1910 the Court suit was settled and Apparao started getting some leisure. In the last two or three years of his life, he was able to produce substantial works like Kondu Bhatteeyam, Bilhaneeyam, Subhadra, Kanyaka Divichu Langaru and Nilagiri songs etc.

Honours were showered on him in his last few years of his life. In 1912 he met Tagore and the Bengal Sahitya Parishad honoured Apparao and had a big tea party in honour of him. The Madras University appointed him a permanent member of the senate. In 1914 the Minute of Dissent to the report of Telugu Composition Subcommittee was published by the Madras University and it was received very well by the public. This was a full sized volume bringing out all the values of using spoken language in the books.

Receiving a copy of this book from Apparao, Yates expressed his praises for it. He said it was an invaluable volume. "From the point of view of the Science of language it has no refutation. You have not given any room for the opponent to say anything against it. I can quite imagine how much of trouble you have taken to write this masterly book." He also said that, "this idea people are not able to accept it to day, it will certainly be accepted in the future. Your health deteriorated because of this hard work, for your endeavour is extra-ordinary."

He tried his hand at drama, poetry, story, essay, and criticism; he introduced the spoken language; he led a full scholarly life by participating in meetings, controversies in newspapers, lectures, discussions in the University, letters of explanations to friends and a host of other literary activities.

He was writing to friends in foreign countries too.

His health as a consequence of all these activities became worse than ever.

He was interested in sports. He used to ride horses, swim, play tennis and billiards, he took pleasure in studying all these games scientifically, He was good at music too. There was not a phase of life in which he was not interested.

In his diaries he had written invaluable details on various subjects – such as the chistling of a fine story. the description of a lovely scene, good conversation and so on.

The quantity of his writings is a little indeed. He had not written many poems but the quality of them makes him a great poet. Every line is like a poem; he gets in his poems World welfare, Human equality, Universal love, Brotherhood, Social reform Spoken language, Modern composition. He says, "yesterday's poetic justice is not going to hold today for I have to portray to humanity even if I were to bind myself to the rules of poetry. I have an obligation towards humanity". "Muthyalasalaru", and his "Desa Bhakti Geetam" are enough to make him great.

His stories "Diddupatu," "Matilda," "Samskartha Hridayam," each one is a beauty.

"Puthadi Bomma Purnamma" is a topical story depicting the social conditions of the day. It is about a beautiful little girl who was sacrificed because of the old convention of selling brides. She was sold off by the parents, that is to say they took some money from an old man and gave her in marriage to him. The style of this poem and the story in it not only appeal so much to the reader, but they are rendered in masterly fashion.

Apparao passed away on 30-11-1915. The Telugu world in particular and India in general lost not only a great poet but a great man.

Dr. Sir Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu

(1862 – 1939)

No name has been so revered and respected as Sir Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu's in the first four decades of this century in Madras Presideney. He has been an eminent teacher, a distinguished religious leader and a creative educationist. His innumerable friends and admirers and loyal students named their children invariably after him in great regard and affection for him, with the result that there was a crop of young Venkataratnams in Andhra in the thirties and forties of this century.

Venkataratnam's scholarship, eloquence, liberal religious outlook, and enthusiasm for work quickened others and called forth the best in them for the welfare of the society. The spirit of service pervaded his whole life.

He held a string of important positions and had addressed any number of gatherings where his articulate speeches and their invaluable content spread his ideas far and wide, within and without the country.

He was given to a good deal of writing. Many of his essays were praised as superb. His essay on "Social Reform" was said to be "worth its weight in gold" by no less a person than the eminent judge, Shri G. Subrahmaniam Iyer of Madras. His speeches have been published in two large volumes. They give an insight into his multifaceted personality. There has been a wide range of subjects comprising devotiona!, educational,

ethical and mystical expressing the whole gamut of his spiritual experience. They were mostly apocalyptic and compendious. "Whatever the theme", says an admirer "the appeal throughout is to the deepest and most enduring elements in our nature. The many moods 'sing to one clear harp in diverse tones, voicing nought but the same word, the sweet word, the suggestive word, the stimulating word, altogether the salutary word. In the main, the same old marks will be perceived of a genius titanic enough to defy the ordinary standards of measurement",

His diction and delivery have been appraised as moving and majestic offering a most refined intellectual feast. In short the editor of his published speeches says that what was said of great James Martineau applied so well to Venkataratnam Naidu, "with a jewelled crozier he shepherded his flock and always led them to the uplands of thought".

Even great scholars abroad like Dr. J. Eslin Carpenter, Principal Emeritus of Manchester College, Oxford said about Sir Venkataratnam that "The influence of such a teacher as the head of a College must have been profound, as he is still in what we consider the fullness of vigour and maturity of experience. I trust that he may have many years yet in which to enlighten and inspire others by his faith and eloquence. The Brahmo Samaj should win numbers to spiritual religion when it can utter its great truth by such a voice". While these words speak volumes about the eminent leader, it presents us with an "epitome of the distinguishing traits of a nobly gifted personality",

His erudite scholarship apart, Sir R. Venkataratnam had been a true friend, guide and philosopher not only to his students and Brahmo Samaj followers but everyone who sought him either for help or for counsel. Most of his earnings went for charities and supported any number of poor and deserving students by paying their fees and buying them their books. As the saying goes his left hand did not know what his right hand was doing in the name of charity. As a matter of fact, a number of students mostly of depressed classes were staying with him

His wife passed away when he was hardly twenty – seven years old, after which he did not marry again. He lived a life of a recluse, sacrificing his all for the sake of the needy.

As a Brahmo Samaj leader, he was spreading the Gospel of this Neo-Hinduism preaching its tenets and himself living according to them.

Sir Raghupati was born in Masulipatam in the years 1962. This year is an important year for India as many great men were born in the same year. His father Appaya Naidu was a subedar in the army and, being an army man, had been constantly moving from place to place and young Venkataratnam was changing his schools as often as his father was transferred. His father was posted to North India where young Venkataratnam studied under Dinanath Banerji and Gangadhara Mukherji who were leading masters of the day.

Later his father came to Deccan. Venkataratnam was fortunate enough to study under the famous master, Aghornath Chattopadhyaya at Hyderabad and appeared for the Matriculation Examination and passed in it creditably. He studied Urdu language too and became proficient in it. In 1885 he joined the Madras Christian College and studied under Dr. Miller and took his B.A. Degree. He admired and revered Dr. Miller who remained till the end of his life, his chief preceptor and Guru. He had the privilege of dedicating his two volumes of speeches and addresses called “Message and Ministrations” in these words “Unto the gratefully cherished memory of my ever revered Pradhanacharya Reverend William Miller”. His admiration for him was so great that he imbibed his ideals and absorbed many a great quality from him. He gave a donation of Rs. 10,000 to Madras University to establish what is known as Dr. Miller Commemoration Lectures every year.

He was a great student of a great teacher indeed. Presiding over the Miller Memorial meeting at Kakinada, which was

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after hearing the sad demise of Rev. Dr. William Miller at Edinburgh, he spoke movingly about his master, whom he called the Mahamahopadhyaya of Southern India and went on describing his qualities of head and heart. He said, inter se "His natural talents and cultivated abilities were of a magnitude quite ample to place him on the fore-front of his contemporaries. His keen acumen, his sound sagacity, his clear grasp of principles, his patient mastery of details, his dispassionate review of issues, his perspicuity of exposition, his untiring industry, his indomitable will to face difficulties, his genuine sympathy for all good causes, his genius for initiative, his undimmed faith in the potency of the Right, would in any honourable field of work have won for him the richest laurels of distinction. Had he chosen the career of a statesman he should undoubtedly have become a "pillar of the state". It were no exaggeration at all to say that a Cabinet Ministership would have been his by common consent. In sheer vital energy - in the capacity for sustained application to diverse duties - his strength was as the strength of ten. He scorned delight and lived laborious days".

Now turning to the carrer of Venkataratnam he took his M.A. and L.T. Degrees from Madras University and joined for his Law which course somehow he did not finish.

He chose the career of teching. He taught in Colleges at Ellore, Rajahmundry and Masulipatam. Later he became the Principal of Mehboob College in 1889 and continued till 1904. From 1905 to 1919 he was the Principal of Pithapuram Raja's College at Kakinada and earned fame and name not only for efficient administration but as a rare teacher of excellence-a teacher who proved that his main concern was the welfare of his students. He was the first one to have started helping the Harijans and others of depressed classes. His one ambition was to see that all his students became good citizens of the country. So he devoted all his time in this direction. No wonder the parents and their children were not merely grateful to this model of a teacher but were deeply devoted to him till the last - a rare phenomenon indeed these days for such rapport between a teacher and students hardly exists.

Recognising his merit not only as a great teacher but as one whose ideals had made the profession of teaching the foremost, The University of Madras elected him as its distinguished Vice - Chancellor. In fact Venkateratanam was the first one to have been an elected chief Executive of this University. During his regime of about four years he had introduced many a laudable change to the benefit of both the teacher and the taught and the welfare of the society in general. He gave prominence to the South Indian languages and bestowed untold facilities and encouragement for their development. As for research it gained unprecedented importance at University.

When he retired he was devoting his time to the Brahma-Samaj movement that grew so strong in Andhra and Madras because of his leadership. There was no large public meeting or important conference that did not invite him to address it or preside over it. He was the Principal Emeritus of Pithapuram Rajah's College at Kakinada, a member of the Madras University Senate, member of the Legislative Council, Brahma Samaj leader and President of Madras Social Service Organisation.

He was a gratefully sought speaker not only because he was extremely eloquent but one who had the courage of his convictions and more so practised what he actually preached.

Long before Mahatmaji appeared on the scene and long before the Congress had put forward its tenets of philosophy, Sir R. Venkataratnam had been the forerunner and a harbinger of their precepts.

He worked very hard for the uplift of the depressed classes. He encouraged inter - caste marriages and he performed a good few of them, by being their high priest. He tried his best to root out caste system from our body politic. He had taken up the cause of the fallen women - the Deva Dasis. Many a speech he had delivered to protect them from the profession which they were compelled to take either by untoward circumstances or

by heredity. He had written extensively as to how a society could help to exterminate this institution of Nautch girls. Speaking about the antinautch movement, he had this to say "Among the several countries with which India would wish to compete in morals and civilisation, there is not one that accords to open flagrant impurity such recognition as this country gives to the nautch girl. Veiled vice and secret incontinuity are to be found all the world over but sexual immorality as a hereditary and acknowledged profession living in peace and amity with and amidst other avocations fortified against the attacks of time or change and endowed with the privileges of social sanction is special to this land."

Venkataratanam's speeches were not only many, but the subjects on which he spoke were highly varied and topical. Most of them are relevant even today and some of them are as much of problems as they were then; for instance speaking about youth and their discipline and character he said,

"Apart from the nature of the public education now in vogue in India much too little-notoriously little-is being done to build up character, to foster noble virtues and create high aspirations in the generations to be. It is indeed agreeably surprising that where such scant attention is given to the healthy rearing up of children, the tone of general morality is nevertheless so satisfactory that betokens the innate goodness of human nature and the intrinsic worth of some of the principles now hardened into customs which were the original moulds of our national life. But the painful experience of every one that has endeavoured to be of some public service almost invariably reports that for a large and civilised nation most disappointingly few are the instances in which our countrymen dare rise above that may be called "neighbourly goodness". "A chivalric spirit, if that term be expressive enough, is notably wanting among us. It is not mere altruism, it is so to speak social transcendentalism. This national drawback early evinces itself in our youth,

Venkataratnam did a good deal for the emancipation of women. He wanted youth and all men to respect women. On one occasion he said 'after generations of unjust treatment no wonder if woman has ceased to be an inspiration to man. But if you cultivate the spirit of reverence for womankind, you will find that woman is inspiring indeed. As you look at a woman, does your heart throb with awe and reverence as in the presence of a saint. How shall I treat a woman-that is the test question for one and all. When a woman is in need of a little service, a look of brotherly encouragement, do not let go the opportunity. Rajah Rammohan Roy never sat down while a woman of any rank was standing in the company. You ought to cultivate that gracious spirit. You can help and honour a woman in numberless ways.'

He admonished people to patronise 'Swadeshi' and help India. Every one ought to feel proud to buy and own things that our country had produced.

Another factor against which he had taken cudgels was smoking and drinking alcohol. He had vehemently attacked this habit on the part of some who were getting ruined ultimately.

Above all he wanted people to practise goodness and live decent ethical lives. Despite his scholarship and wisdom and having been well placed in life, he was extremely kind and gentle. His generosity and helpfulness became proverbial.

His students collected a large amount of money and presented a purse to him on the occasion of his diamond Jubilee celebrations "Shastiabdi" (Sixtieth birthday) which he generously donated to Andhra University to institute some annual prizes for deserving students

Apart from what he gave himself, he would often prevail upon the Rajah of Pithapuram to help financially deserving individuals and institutions. The Rajah had the greatest respect for him; so both together did many a grand thing for their people.

Venkataratnam was able to establish in Kakinada an educational institution, an orphanage, a building for Brahmo Samaj activities and a fund for the activities for the Brahmo Samaj

In recognition of his great services people honoured him in very many ways. Titles of Rao Bahdur, Diwan Bahdur and finally knighthood were conferred on him by the Government. Many an honoris causa of L, L. D; and D, Litt, degrees were conferred on him by various Universities. The Brahmo Samaj gave him the title of Brahmarishi, one of great affection and regard for him.

His whole life was dedicated to many a cause leading to the service of humanity, He passed away in 1939 after living a full and noble life.

Desabhakta Konda Venkatappaiah

(1866 – 1949)

Konda Venkatappaiah can be rightly acclaimed as the Father of the Gandhian Movement in Andhra region and one of those who have given a creative expression to the great ideals that informed their Party's programmes and policies

He was the first and foremost congress leader in Andhradesa. He was the leader of the Satyagraha movement – salt satyagraha; and for that matter, he was the first one to have started all the movements of Gandhiji in Andhra and laboured hard for their ultimate triumph in his home town, Guntur. As one of his admirers had said Venkatappaiah had made Guntur into a regular Kurukshetra.

As early as in 1912 Venkatappaiah agitated for the State of Andhra. Here again he was the first one to have demanded Linguistic States, in particular for a separate state for the Telugu speaking people in India.

Desabhakta, the loving title that was so affectionately conferred on him in later years for his genuine patriotic feeling towards his Country, in particular his home State Andhra had been truly a well deserved one for all his incessant and indefatigable struggles for the cause of freedom.

He was not merely a valiant soldier on all fronts of political battles fought by Gandhiji but a constructive worker who agitated for many a cause like women's freedom and facilities for their education. He appealed to the Government to permit

women to appear for Higher Examinations like Matriculation, Intermediate and B.A. privately without attending any school or college. More than this, he was a champion of widow remarriage and he performed one or two widow marriages at Masulipatam.

Venkatappaiah was born on 22nd February 1866 at Guntur in a middle class Brahmin family. He had his schooling in Guntur Mission School; thereafter he joined the Government Arts College at Rajahmundry to do his F.A. Metcalf who was a well-known English educationist at the time was the Principal of the College. Venkatappaiah left after a year for Madras, where he did his B.A. and B.L.

Soon in 1894 he set up his legal practice at Masulipatam where before long, he became the leading lawyer of the town earning about a thousand rupees a month. In 1905 when the District Court was established in Guntur, Venkatappaiah moved to Guntur, his home town where he started to practise.

Even while he was practising, despite his busy schedule, he was able to spare a good deal of his time for social service. His public spiritedness made him take great interest in many of the social reforms, that were being worked out by all-India leaders then.

It is indeed a marvel as to how Venkatappaiah a full fledged lawyer found time to edit a newspaper, Krishna Patrika. Some of his articles were open and frank and courageous in condemning the evil Hindu practices that were being unfortunately perpetrated in the false name of religion.

Besides articles on urgent social reforms, Venkatappaiah wielded his facile pen in the direction of politics. Gandhiji's call to the nation made him immediately an ardent disciple who unhesitatingly pleaded strongly with people to join the National Movement. Andhra responded to his call and men and women in very large numbers began to flock the Congress headquarters for their admission into the Congress Party.

In order to devote whole heartedly his attention to all Gandhiji's movements, Desabhakta gave up his entire practice in 1915 and plunged himself fully into politics.

Now that his political career has begun, he incessantly worked at it and strove hard to popularise Gandhiji's programmes. One can easily imagine that it was not that easy those days to convince people either of social reforms or of political movements. However Venkatappiah with his persuasive ways and enduring qualities and dogged perseverance, led almost every national movement to triumph in Andhra. Guntur by then had become a sanctified place for starting fresh activities.

His hard work was being slowly recognised and Venkatappiah was continuously holding some position or the other of power that was making him highly influential, although his simple nature added to his unimpeachable integrity made him unaware of them. He was soon made the Secretary of the local Congress Committee and very shortly in 1918 he became the President of the District Congress which position he held till 1920. He was coming closer to Gandhiji by his honest and sincere work. Later he was elected a member of the Congress Working Committee which he retained for a number of years.

For all his non-cooperation with the British, Konda was incarcerated four times in the years 1921, 1930, 1932 and 1942. The last of his prison-term was, when he was quite old, 76 years.

When the Congress accepted office Konda became a member of the Madras Legislature.

He was more for the programme of constructive work rather than for agitation.

He was a man given to kindness, charity and helpfulness. His life in jail has been described by one of his contemporaries as an ideal one that portrays the picture of his true self. Whenever there were differences of opinion between the congress political prisoners and the jail management, Kondaji was asked

to settle them. As for quarrels among the convicts Kondaji became an unappointed Magistrate to decide their cases. His love for fellow prisoners and his concern for the ailing members and his ever ready help made him all the more lovable.

The Congress at Kakinada in 1923 is considered in more than one way very important by historians. At any rate it was a milestone in the history of Andhra. Due to the internal split of the Congress between "Changers" and "No-Changers" particularly in regard to the acceptance of office, Chittaranjan Das resigned his office of the President of the Congress. Konda was elected to this high office for the remaining period. It was then Duggirala was elected to Chief General Secretary's Office. The office, though for a short period, was shifted to Vijiyawada. This constitutes a special chapter in the recent political history of Andhra. Konda was also the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Conference. The Congress membership rose to 4181, the largest then.

When the Congress Annual Conference met at Vijayawada, the prominent present were the Ali brothers, Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, Rajaji, Vallabbhai and Vittal Bhai, Dr. Ansari, Moulana, Pandit Nehru and many others. Venkatappaiah addressed the gathering in Hindi although it was written in English !

The Conference once again reiterated and stressed the resolution passed at Calcutta, Nagapur, Ahmedabad and Gaya for non-cooperation. There was no substantial change in their programme.

Maulana praised the hospitality of the Andhras for their good arrangements including their sumptuous and delicious food, music and other comforts.

Then Mrs. Sarojini Naidu had this to say, "I am an Andhra. I belong to the Andhradesa. Though Andhradesa has not the high intellectual faculty and the superior, dogged stubborn

culture of neighbouring province of Tamilnad, so very well represented on the platform here, yet it is keeping their steadiness and grace that are peculiar heritage of the women whom Mahatma Gandhi called "the queens of the spinning wheel", and therefore their consorts also have qualities worthy of these queens. I am proud today that high and low alike the leaders and the volunteers all have kept alive the tradition, of the kings of Andhradesa. Krishnadevaraya's hospitality has been offered to the rest of India".

When the salt Satyagraha was announced, members of the Congress in various parts of India hardly understood its significance. Dr Pattabhi and Kondaji went to Sabarmati to ascertain the details of this. In fact Konda was wondering whether this simple act of making salt would ever make the British yield; further, some time, at least 6 months for publicity, would be required. For this Gandhiji retorted that even 6 minutes could not be given !

And yet when he returned to Guntur he found a big camp was organised by Unnava Laxminarayana in Kothapeta in Yadavallivari Satram and the High Command had entrusted responsibility to Konda in this regard. The whole of Andhra was agog with news and every one was alert with instructions from Konda and the Satyagraha was launched in full swing. In the history of Andhra salt Satyagraha in 1930, Devarampadu played a memorable role. Leaders like Prakasam, Pattabhi and Kaleshwara Rao had been arrested. A little later Konda himself was taken to the jail.

In the meanwhile an agreement was drawn in 1931 March 5, between Gandhiji and Irwin, that salt could be made now by people. The prisoners were released,

In 1932 another fresh phase of the movement had been started. Once again most of the leaders along with Gandhiji were arrested,

From 1934 to 1935 Konda after returning from the Jail had started concentrating on Harijan welfare work. He had a long tour of the Telugu Districts and villages- He got the villages cleaned and started agitating for the Harijan entry into the temples. The Brahmins staged a big protest against the entry. However Konda tried and succeeded in making the opposition know their underlying ideals.

In 1940 when individual Satyagraha was being offered, Gandhi had issued a statement that old and ailing people should not participate in Satyagraha. He had written a personal letter to Konda which made the latter very unhappy, But in 1942 when he was taken away as a detenu he was happy that he was still participating in the national struggle

Political prisoners indulged either in learning new languages to while away their time or in writing books. Tilak wrote his immortal "Gita Rahasya" in Mandalay jail; Pandit Nehru wrote his "Glimpses of World History" and his autobiography while in jail. Prakasam wrote his Autobiography when he was serving his sentence; similarly, Konda had been writing some books in the jail.

In 1922, when he was in Cuddalore, he wrote in Telugu the story of William the Silent of the 16th Century who fought in his own way and obtained freedom for his country. He translated the English work 'The Rise of Dutch Republic' into Telugu. It became a Magnum Opus of a 1000 pages. He also wrote a special dictionary where he took selective words from Apte's Dictionary and got a glossary exclusively for the use of those who are engaged in translating works from English into Telugu.

Later in life he wrote some more books. He says in one of his letters to a friend, Rayasam Venkata Sivudu that he had a vision of Lord Venkateshwara and now, after this, he was able to write a long poem called 'Venkateshwara Sevananda Lahari' of 101 Poems and this was published in the first year

of our independence, on 15th August 1947. These poems are on similar lines with Pothana's Bhagavatam with lilting music and devotion to God.

Konda wrote his autobiography in his old age. He had not written daily accounts of his life but, depending on his strong memory, he put down broad major events that had taken place. Part one ends with 1918 and part II beginning with 1919 ends with 1930. His life-story has a philosophical bent.

Konda's domestic life had been far from happy. Out of his 6 children, four girls and two boys, two boys and two girls passed away when they were quite young. His two daughters Buchi Laxmamma and Parvatidevi were married and unfortunately Parvati Devi lost her husband quite early. She graduated from Benaras Hindu University and in 1946 went to Switzerland as a delegate to the International Women's Conference. She has been all along keeping indifferent health. She is an articulate and powerful speaker. She is today an M. L. C. and lives in Guntur. Konda dedicated his autobiography to the memory of his wife Venkata Subbaramba, who was ailing most of the time and was bed-ridden for some years with paralysis and passed away in 1936.

In his last days Konda felt very anxious about the conditions in South India. He wrote to Gandhiji that MLA's and Ministers were far from being ethical. Among the Congressmen he said there was the character crisis.

Gandhiji read out this letter at his prayer meeting and published in Young India some excerpts from Konda's letter like: "As you know, the object of writing this letter to you was not with the intention of merely exposing the ministers or the members of the Legislature, but to inform you of the moral weakness which has overwhelmed the Congressmen both in and outside the Legislative bodies and to request you to accept a suggestion made to you many years back to come

to Andhra and stay for some months, so that your life and preachings might have a permanent effect on the character and conduct of the people and particularly congressmen".

From his 80th year onwards Konda was honoured by many organisations in South India especially in Telugu districts. All of them invited him as the Chief Guest for their important public functions and gave him welcome addresses in English, Telugu, Tamil and Hindi.

His 84th birth day was greatly celebrated as "Sahasramasa Vardhanti" - one who has been blessed to live for over 1000 months. Dr. C. R. Reddy wrote to Konda on this auspicious occasion, 'My dear and esteemed friend, just read in the papers of your illustrious 84th Jayanti and wish to associate myself with your many friends and admirers in its celebration. By your high character and lofty spirit of noble detachment from the sordid aspects of public life, you have raised the level and standard of our politics to difficult heights of attainment and have brought meritorious credit to our country. I congratulate you as a sincere friend and admirer on your Vardhanti and wish you many many happy returns"

In 1935 Congress after great deliberation decided to enter the Legislature. So Congressmen accepted Office, The Justice Party also contested, The Congress came victorious; Konda stood for elections and won; Rajaji became the Chief Minister of Madras and Prakasam the Revenue Minister

Konda was the senior most congressman whose name was a household word in South India and yet he was not elected the leader. But he was not discontented. He, as a member of Legislature, was doing his duty. In fact he introduced many a bill to the relief of the common man.

Konda's term as a Legislator was over in 1946 he was not re-elected. But he was least concerned about it, but was

contributing his might to the cause of humanity and human suffering.

Konda, despite his age, was as active in mind as ever.

Konda passed away in 1949 at the ripe age of 84 year.

A long life of hard and sincere work came to a close. In the words of Eswara Dutt "He was a man of action and not of words. Amongst the Andhra Congressmen he earns the greatest weight in all sections of his countrymen.

"His achievements in the domain of intellect are quite meagre. He has never shared a policy or influenced a decision or made any striking contribution to an important problem. His temperament is either fury or tears.

"Virtue is its own reward" seems to be the principle underlying his work. A silent and sincere worker his sole anxiety was to advance Andhra cause and enhance the Andhra glory."

Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham

(1867 – 1-45)

“Versatile” is the one word that best describes the genius of Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham – poet, scholar, dramatist, essayist, orator, teacher and social reformer. Chilakamarti was a multi – splendoured personality – a veritable procession of man. Born at a time when change was its presiding disposition, he seemed eminently fitted to set the direction and pace for the progress that was sought to be achieved. Like the mighty Godavari on the banks of which he grew up and made his home, his creative genius poured forth a flood of writings – novels, plays, essays and poems that hastened the Telugu Renaissance. What is most remarkable is that he did not allow even his blindness (with which he was stricken in his later years) to come in the way of accomplishing what he set out to do, a fact that may remind one of Milton. His life was indeed a saga of indomitable spirit and incredible achievement.

Chilakamarti was born in 1867 in a family noted for its learning and scholarship at Khandavalli, a village in Goadvari District. And thanks to his father’s ambition to make him a Sanatanist; he had his Upanayanam performed when he was hardly five years old. Even at that tender age, he gave glimpses of what he was to become later in his life. He not only learnt “Gayatri Japam” but was found one day teaching it to a boy of the barber caste which so shocked the orthodox grown-ups that they immediately put an end to his practising it daily. The young Chi akamarti could not however be expected to know the significance of the “Gayatri Mantram” much less the injunction against its practice by the members of the lower castes. But in

retrospect this incident seems portentous in that it speaks of the catholicity of his outlook and reforming zeal which marked his actions in his mature years.

A brilliant student with a remarkable flair for the learning of languages, Chilakamarti was first in his class in all the subjects and acquired a rare proficiency in Sanskrit and Telugu (Veeresalingam Pantulu was his Telugu Pandit) while receiving English education at Rajahmundry. But after his High School he was forced by his financial circumstances to take up a teaching position and he taught Telugu at various schools at Rajahmundry for several years,

There were at that time, various movements calling for service and self-sacrifice. Brahmo Samaj with its reformist plank was active in the Eastern India with Keshab Chandra Sen directing it. Prarthana Samaj with its High Priest, Justice Mahadev Govinda Ranade was enthusiastically preaching Neo-Hinduism and social reform in the West, and Deva Samaj and Arya Samaj in the North were vigorously trying to strengthen Hinduism by removing all the crevices that had formed through the ages:

The irreconcilable leader in Andhra at the time was Veeresalingam whose activities at his Headquarters in Rajahmundry inspired splendid work. Chilakamarti, an ardent student and a loving admirer of Veeresalingam, followed in the footsteps of his master and plunged into some of the social reform activities.

Besides these activities Chilakamarti who had started writing poetry, even as a boy, won recognition as a poet. It was at this time Immaneni Hanumantha Rao Naidu, the Principal of a Middle School in Rajahmundry and the Founder President of a Dramatic Association in Rajahmundry came to be regarded as a patron of letters since he encouraged young promising writers to write poems and dramas for him to put on boards.

He approached Chilakamarti to write a play on "Keechakavadha" which he did and when it was acted it was an unprecedented success, that it set the Godavari on flames as it were. That

was only the beginning, since Naidu's requests being unending the dramatist continued to write plays most of which were in prose. It was only in 1920 when Satyavolu Gunneswar Rao established a new dramatic association and announced awards for those actors who could sing poems in the dramas that Chilakamarti came to include poems in his dramas.

“Draupadi Parinayam,” “Nala Natakamu,” “Sitaparinayam,” “Sri Ramajananamu” were some of his dramas. These plays were so ideally written for the stage that they proved a great success, and they were staged many a time, Chilakamarti's popularity as a play-wright gained “day by day and Veeresalingam called him the local Shakespeare ! Among his plays, “Gayopakhyanam” was so popular that it was staged any number of times, although the author felt that “Prasannayadavamu” was his best. It is interesting to note that Tanguturi Prakasam had often taken part in these plays for he was the protege of Immaneni Hanumantha Rao. In “Sriramajananam” Prakasam Pantulu had taken the part of Dasaratha and later in the same play as Kausalya and Immaneni himself appearing as Ravana to the satisfaction of all !

Chilakamarti had also translated some Sanskrit plays into Telugu. There was a galaxy of play-wrights like Kandukuri Veeresalingam, Vaddadi Subbarayadu, Balijepalli Lakshmi-kantham, Sripada Krishnamurti Shasri and others at this time but none of their plays matched those of Chilakamarti.

Chilakamarti's forte was the novel which had just then made its entry into Telugu literature. Veeresalingam was almost the first one to have written a novel “Rajasekhara Charitramu” after the fashion of Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, and few writers followed his lead. Fortunately for Telugu literature, Nyapati Subbarao, one of the leading advocates of Rajahmundry, to encourage novel-writing announced an award for the best Telugu novel in 1893. Fourteen contestants entered the competition including our author, Chitakamarti and two novels were adjudged the best. They were Chilakamarti's “Ramachandra

Vijayamu" and Goteti Kanakaraju's "Viveka Vijayamu" and both were to share the award.

Again in 1896 a fresh award for the best novel was announced by Nyapati Subbarao and again Chilakamarti's book "Hemalatha" was considered the best which bagged the much coveted prize. Little wonder that in the following year again Chilakamarti's new novel "Ahalyabai" won the first prize, despite stiff competition. It seemed that no other novelist would like to enter any contest if Chilakamarti was participating in it ! Literally a crop of fine novels by him followed and "Soundaryatilaka," "Karpura Manjari" got again first prizes. "Sudha Saraschandramu," "Krishnaveni" and others that captured the hearts of the novel - reading public proved that Chilakamarti was the only bright and shining star on the firmament of the Telugu novel.

Another phase of achievement in Chilakamarti's life was in the field of journalism. Those were the days when there were very few periodicals or newspapers. Veeresalingam, who is credited with many a "first", was the first one to have started a newspaper called "Vivekavardhani." Then there was Kokkonda Venkataratnam who also ran his own paper. Similarly the zamindar of Polavaram had started a newspaper called "Saraswati" at Rajahmundry and appointed Chilakamarti as its editor. It ran for some time and invaluable Telugu literature had been published. But then, for some reason, the Zamindar wanted the paper to be shifted to Kakinada and desired the editor too to come there. To Chilakamarti the paper was not his only concern for he had other important activities which he could not ignore. So he remained at Rajahmundry and gave up his connection with the paper. However, later, Chilakamarti had established a monthly called "Manohara", a weekly "Desamata" from which a good deal of publishing work was done,

In the monthly his "Tales from Rajasthan" "Ramayanam" and other important political essays condemning the foreign Government appeared.

In the first decade of this century there was the literary controversy as regards the kind of Telugu language that should be encouraged as medium of writing. There were two prominent groups; one said that the spoken language should be unhesitatingly used. It is the natural spoken language that can be followed by all and that alone seems right in the changing democratic world. Whereas the other group felt that the "Grandhika," the bookish style ought to be used for it is different from the common spoken language which would kill the grand style of the language and ultimately Telugu literature. In this controversy Chilakamarti supported the "Grandhika" the bookish style.

Since his forty - second year Chilakamarti's eye had been failing and finally he became blind. In spite of this very great handicap he was able to turn out so much literary work that one cannot but marvel at his achievement.

Chilakamarti was not without patriotic feeling. He may not have written much in this direction but what little he wrote was full of feeling and very impressive.

Chilakamarti identified himself with some of the national causes and did a good deal for the depressed classes. He opened a school for the Harijan and scheduled castes and he was devoting some of his precious time to the cause. Once when the Annual Congress Committee meeting was held at Madras there was a Depressed Classes Convention too where every one who was doing welfare work was giving an account of the work done in this regard. Our authour was also requested to relate his experience. He made an eloquent speech in English for an hour and concluded humbly that due to his blindness, he was able to do only that much. Ganesh Chandravarkar who was presiding over the meeting got up quickly to embrace him and said that the truth was, he was not blind, but it was they who were really blind.

One March 4th in 1923 the public of Rajahmundry celebrated very affectionately his sixtieth birthday and on that occasion brought out a volume of his complete works. He was a prolific writer whose contributions were more than a hundred volumes with rich and varied content. They have not only enriched our language and literature but have made us marvel, and, as I am sure, will make posterity wonder how any one could have achieved so much as this great author, Chilakamarti.

In 1943 Andhra University honoured him by conferring the title of "Kalaprapurna" on him. In 1944 the Andhra Abhyudaya Writers Society published his autobiography. In the following year Chilakamarti, after a life of achievement and supreme fulfilment, breathed his last leaving the Telugu world to mourn his loss.

Deshodharaka Kashinathuni Nageshwar Rao

(1867 – 1938)

“From rags to riches” sums up the life of Kashinathuni Nageshwar Rao whose meteoric rise to fame and fortune reads like a fairy tale.

He was born in Elakurru Village in Krishna District in 1867 on 1st of May. He had a sister and a brother.

He had his schooling in this little village till fifth standard after which, the whole family shifted to Masulipatam for his higher education. He matriculated here and proceeded to Madras for his Collegiate studies and joined the Madras Christian College where he appeared for his B. A. which he was not able to complete as he did not get enough marks in History !

His marriage with Ramayamma a niece of Shri Rentaala Subbarao, a well known businessman at Madras, who was a relation of his, marks a turning point in his life. He started working in Subbarao's business concern called the “Victoria Depot” and learnt the various tricks of the trade.

This tempted him to become independent: so he was anxious to have his own business for which he proceeded to Bombay. He met a friend called Ganapathy who helped him to get a small post in a British Company called the William Company. He worked very hard and showed his skill as a businessman and impressed the authorities; when the Chief was leaving

India he left the organisation in Nageshwar Rao's care and then on he was looking after the business. Here Dame Fortune seemed to have favoured him and in the very first month itself, he was reported to have made a profit of Rs. 1500 which at the time was no small amount. Gradually his business flourished and he started minting money.

Making money is one thing and the way in which it is spent is another. Nageshwar Rao, although a businessman, was basically a scholar given to studies, particularly to the development of Telugu language and literature. His contribution to the field of Telugu language is immense.

Nageshwar Rao was popularly known as Amrutanjan Nageshwar Rao. Amrutanjan an efficacious medicine for colds and coughs was alleged to have been his own prescription or perhaps given to him by some medical expert for he was no medical doctor, and yet he was getting a number of Ayurvedic medicines prepared for sale. No one knew as to who had presented him with this useful prescription of Amrutanjan. But the fact remained that it was his and his sole monopoly. However no one knew the secret of the prescription, for it was very carefully guarded by him and none knew how it was made.

The wonder of wonders was he seemed to have known the secret of the trade namely superb advertisement. The art of advertisement even today is not well known in our country. For instance if one sees this art and its efficacy in a foreign country like the United States of America one is taken aback to see the implications and the modus operandi of this art. Somehow Nageshwar Rao seemed to have imbibed the technique of this art, for there is no newspaper in our country in which it had not appeared. If there were any Exhibitions or gatherings of people there was sure to be a large noticeable advertisement of Amrutanjan. What was more he had thought of the various ways in which it should appear—the attractive write up—naturally with all superlatives that this wonder drug would cure all head

aches and pains from A to Z and its colour - blocks marvelled every one. The net result of all this incessant activity in regard to the drug brought tons of money to Nageshwar Rao.

Many thought merely for the publicity of Amrutanjan Nageshwar Rao had started his "Andhra Patrika"! But one cannot overlook the other two important benefits which the paper brought namely expansion of politics in Andhra and improvament of Telugu language. Whatever the reason, this esteemed newspaper was started in Bombay in 1908 where Nageshwar Rao was doing his business at the time.

One could easily imagine the hardships he must have had in starting a Telugu newspaper in Bombay where publishing seemed a herculian task. However in course of time Nageshwar Rao thought it better to shift the paper to Madras (then there was no separate Andhra) where he had taken a house in Thambu Chetty street in which the printing of the newspaper was established. He had to incur no small expenditure on account of this. It is said that he had to spend Rs. 76,000 for its full establishment. When the paper became a daily in 1914, when the first World War has begun, it was serving the needs of no less than three and a half crores of Telugu people who did not then have a single Telugu Daily.

Added to the Daily he had started a monthly Telugu Magazine called "Bharati" in 1924, a well known journal today. Those days even as the Andhra Patrika, it was a lone monthly. It gave fine opportunities to lovers of art and literature, Telugu scholars, political thinkers and other experts in other fields to express their ideas.

Besides these, Nageshwar Rao's immense literary interest was seen in his establishing what was known as Andhra Grandha Mala under whose auspices a number of invaluable books had been published, the most important of which has been "Andhra Vignana Sarwasvamu". He not oniy published other's books, but

he himself had contributed some five essays which appeared under the name of "Sarwasvamu" "Anaahatamu" "Aparokshanubhuti" "Anubhavasaramu" and "Allama Prabhuvu".

Every year a new year special edition of the Newspaper of about 200 pages was brought out. The public just loved to read this, for its get-up and contents were very attractive.

Nageshwar Rao himself was an author and a lover of books. His commentary on "Bhagavat Gita" – "Bhagavata Bhashyamu" "Andhra Vangmaya Charitramu." display his innate knowledge of philosophy and scholarship in Telugu and Sanskrit languages.

While he was involved in all these activities, he did not hesitate to take part in the national struggle that was going on then. As a matter of fact he was interested in the State politics for, sometime in 1919, he was the President of the State Congress Committee. In fact the Surat Congress meeting held in 1907 roused his interest in politics. In the same year he was elected the President of the Special Conference of the Andhra Maha Sabha that met at Guntur.

In 1930 when he was 63 years old he responded to Gandhiji's call and joined the Salt Satyagraha and as a consequence he had to serve six months sentence in the jail; again in 1932 he courted jail and was by then fully involved in politics.

His time, as any one could see, was spent among his three loves – the first and foremost being his business that was supporting financially all his activities, the second one was his journalistic activities and lastly his politics,

His love of art had made him establish many an art centre like Durga Kala Mandiram at Vijayawada, although a Cinema House now, is a little different from the other ordinary theatres. It has a lovely stage and dramas are staged from time to time; the Hindu theatre paintings and drawings at Masulipattam attracted him. His establishing prizes for best pictures and

paintings in Bharati is another strong evidence of his love of art and architectural beauties like Ajanta, Ellora, Hampi and Amaravati which are often printed in his journal and newspaper.

His charities were untold. Most of the libraries in our State have had his financial support at one time or the other. Many artists and pandits and poor students have had his financial support in their education or publishing their books or getting their opportunities for journalist work.

His interest in social reforms was no less. His was not merely an academic interest but genuine one that saw the practical side of it.

His only daughter was married after puberty – an action which was much criticised those days. Nevertheless Nageshwar Rao did not deter from it, for he was convinced that whatever he was doing was correct.

Justifiably in 1923 he was conferred the title of Deshodharaka by the Andhra Maha Sabha and later the title of Vishwadata by the Hindu in 1937 and “Kalaprapurna” of Andhra University.

He passed away on April 11th in 1938 leaving the world of journalism poor. His contribution to the cause of Telugu language and literature has been tremendous. His name is ever remembered by his people.

Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy

(1869 – 1953)

Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy was one of the most fascinating personalities whose integrity and constancy of purpose were not allowed to be shaken by any consideration, personal or otherwise. Besides, with indomitable courage, extraordinary kindness, generous impulses he enjoined himself in a variety of activities that brought untold benefits to his people. He was a man with a genuine feeling of understanding and sympathy for all - be he a Muslim or a Hindu or for that matter any one irrespective of caste or creed. As Dr. C. R. Reddy has said, "In fact genuine Hindu - Muslim unity can be promoted only by people of the type of the Raja Bahadur who do not suffer from the inhibition of racial or religious animosities. He is a synthetic genius - a synthesis that is produced by mutual affection and reconciliation and not through attempts at absorption of one into the other by force or policy".

So the greatest factor in Raja Bahadur's life was his talent or skill or by whatever name one may call it that enabled him to treat and please the Hindu and Muslim alike. He was a cluster of admirable qualities. Suravaram Pratapa Reddy in his biography of Raja Bahadur says, that even as Abraham Lincoln the former "was well known for his industry, tact, perseverance, integrity, courage, economy, thoroughness, punctuality, decision and benevolence".

Raja Bahadur was born in a well - to - do family in the village of Rajanampeta, but in course of time his family became penniless as it had lost its estate in making a careless deal on trust with a fellow Jagirdar who cheated the family. His correct

date of birth is not available, however the date as entered in his service book was 16. Ardibekesih. 1279 fasli equal to 1869 A. D. His mother passed away after three days of his birth. His father later married his mother's sister. He was brought up by his maternal grand - mother Kishtamma who was the sister of Raja Rameshwar Rao Bahadur I, one of the earliest rulers of Vanaparti State in Mahaboobnagar District.

Venkatarama Reddy was in the village of his grand-mother till he was 9 years old and was learning Telugu in a school in the vicinity. Later he was taken to Vanaparti where his mother's uncle the Raja Saheb passed away and his wife having had no children adopted a boy named Raja Rameshwar Rao who became Raja Bahadur's classmate and friend. He was here for about three years after which his maternal uncle William Wahab, (This name was given to him by the Padri of his school who was in the habit of giving Christian names to all his pupils) a District Police Officer took him to Raichur and admitted him into a school along with his son where they were prosecuting both Telugu and English studies.

Soon as ill - luck would have it, Wahab passed away and there was no other alternative for Raja Bahadur but to go to the village of the grand - mother who along with his uncle had already come to take the boy away.

This the young boy did not like ; so he hastened to his old teacher Moulvi and cried for his help, but the latter was helpless and could do nothing except pray for him. There was no other alternative for the boy but to go.

In the meanwhile an incident had taken place which marks a milestone in the life of young Reddy. William Wahab's friend a Pathan named Nazir Mohammed Khan who came to Raichur to take charge of the office that had fallen vacant by Wahab's death, went to see Venkatarama Reddy's relations to condole with them. He had seen the little boy Reddy with his uncle. So he enquired as to what he was going to do. They

said they were taking him to their village to do farming work which literally shocked the Pathan - who said that he would like to take him to Hyderabad with him. The family did not like this at all in fact was shocked at this proposal but the Pathan was stubborn and had his way.

So the young boy went with him to Hyderabad, where, in the name of friendship, Nazir Mohammed Khan brought him up with care and affection. When Venkatarama Reddy was 18 years old the Pathan tried to employ him in the Police Department and succeeded in getting him an Amin's post in the Police Department on a salary of Rs. 60/- per month plus 20/- for horse allowance,

In the beginning even though he was a novice who had no training none took him to task as everyone in the Department knew that he was William Wahab's nephew. Young Reddy's assistant was doing all the work in his early stages of the job and he had only to sign papers. But in course of time he worked hard and conscientiously learnt the work which he was very scrupulously carrying out.

His desire to do his work well is seen in his earnestness in learning law from Varada Rao who was the Tahsildar at Yadagiri where he was transferred. The one and a half years that he stayed here, he was putting his time to good use. Since both were employed, they hardly found time to make any progress in law. However there was a probationer named Giri Rao studying law at the time for his examination. He made acquaintance with him and had some lessons in law from him also. Reddy appeared for the preliminary law examination but failed. However he had acquainted himself with law.

Reddy's friendship with Giri Rao lasted for 45 years, and both were engaged in their professions with growing success, one as a lawyer who later became a judge and the other as the Kotwal. While he was here for the first time there were Hindu Muslim riots which he very tactfully and skilfully brought peace

which both the parties appreciated. This was the beginning of his glorious career- For he never took anything for granted whether it was a small or big affair; he himself would study the case and try his level best to solve the problem.

It must be mentioned here that those days, there was a good deal of burglary by the Thugs and dacoits for which day and night as a young police man he strove hard to root out the menace in whichever place he worked.

When he was in Kareemnagar, still as an Amin. he did a wonderful job of catching hold of a number of burglars who as a community of mat and basket makers were professional robbers in the nights. They usually entered houses and walked off with jewels and other valuables. Many Police Officers tried their hands earlier in catching them but in vain. Reddy tried his best - he went himself to their dwellings and searched their huts thoroughly but found nothing. He was not satisfied. Once again he conducted a thorough search; this time he found that they had hidden the jewelry in the double woven mats.

Henkin, an Englishman who was the Police Chief at the time, on his inspection tour came to Kareemnagar and found to his surprise that the station under young Reddy was just spick and span - every item of it was superb. In fact the English Chief was surprised as to how he could have managed it so beautifully. He wanted to examine his platoon in drill and in that too the police men were quite good. The District Police Officer the "Mohethemin". a Muslim said the secret of Reddy was that somehow he comes to know when a superior officer visits and he gets things ready! But Henkin knew that it was impossible.

As years rolled by Venkatarama Reddy was becoming not only an expert in his work but more and more conscientious and as the saying goes nothing succeeds like success; he was going

ahead step by step with his real hard work, genuine kindness and goodness.

Soon Reddy was appointed as the Police Officer of the District of Atraf Balda Zilla, set aside for the personal expenses of Nawab Mir Mahbbob Ali Khan Bahadur who was the last of the great Moghuls. About him even to this day legendary stories are related as to how - he used to make his appearance to people once in a few months and his Darbar used to be so dignified and rightly royal. He was respecting all religions, and whenever he went out they were throwing money all over; he loved his people and so on.

Even though Reddy was in his direct service he never had an opportunity either to see him or go near him.

With the death of H. E. H. Mir Mahboob Ali Khan Bahadur, the Nizam, many changes had taken place Reddy hopped from place to place. For sometime, at the instance of the Raja of Vanaparti, he was the Secretary of the Raja and then he was, at the request of his friend Imam Jung, at Gulbarga, as the District Police Officer. Venkatarama Reddy was his able and pleasing assistant. Their friendship grew and then when he became the Kotval, he wanted Reddy, his assistant to be transferred from the District to the City Police as his Chief Assistant (Avval Madadgar Kotval) on a salary of Rs. 500/- per month. This was in 1913.

Kotval was a man who was feared. Even the highly placed officers and jagirdars were literally scared of him. But to Reddy he was very pleasant and kind. In 1919 he passed away. Venkatarama Reddy never thought of the possibility of his being appointed in the place of his Chief for no Hindu was so far given this high office. Secondly, despite being for some years the chief assistant to the Kotval in the city Police, he had never met the Nizam. However now he was sent for and Venkataram Reddy was rather nervous, as he had never met H. E. H. the Nizam; he was ignorant of the Palace ways and was wondering as to how he

should meet him. He soon saw him and the Nizam observed him from head to foot and sent him away. Soon orders were issued that Venkatarama Reddy would be the Kotval "till further orders".

Now Reddy had not only more responsibilities, but the conditions prevailing in the Country were far from being congenial to the police. In fact they were actually trying. On one side, there was the Khilafat Movement raging in British India and on the other the Indian National Congress was working with its Satyagraha movement. There were signs of these movements in effect within the State of Hyderabad. Further there were the feudal nobles with their antiquated ideas, on one side and the people with their awakening, fighting for their rights. In Hyderabad again there were the Arabs with their swords and guns; there were the Sikhs and others each trying to have their own way.

Under these conditions Reddy's performance was on trial. He was nervous too as to what the Nizam would think of his administration. Apart from his hard work, he brought in many changes in the Police Department. The chief point of his success was that he never took any thing for granted. Whether the case in question was negligible or of great concern, he would not let it to his sub-ordinates, unless he had examined himself thoroughly and studied the case. This procedure had not only made him know everything, but had helped him to control the entire situation of the State.

Added to these, many a luminary like the Viceroy, Lord Reading and Prince of Wales visited the State. The visit of the Prince, later Edward the VIII, gave no less an anxiety to the Kotval; for instance a small detail had bothered all of them. Sir Ali Imam, the Minister of Hyderabad then and the British Resident Mr. Russel and the other members of the Cabinet felt that the Prince should be taken in a car in procession. Whereas the Prince wanted to go in a carriage drawn by four horses. The

Prime Minister and others felt that the carriage procession was not absolutely secure for even Gandhi had advised the British Government not to send the Prince to India; but Venkatarama Reddy was quite confident that his arrangements would go off well. He assured that there should not be any fear on account of security arrangements. Accordingly preparations were afoot for about three or four months with great care and training of men. A couple of weeks before the arrival of the Prince, Mr. Henkin, the former District Police Director was asked to be the Security Officer of the Prince's Residence. Henkin, after surveying the arrangements, was not only pleased and satisfied with them but said to Reddy "You are my only deserving student. Even I could not have done anything better regarding these arrangements".

People were invited to be on either side by the roads four and five deep. He did not want the streets to be empty either. The C. I. D. from Simla came to see whether the arrangements were satisfactory and they went round to find that all was well.

The Prince's visit went off well and Reddy was given all laurels. In 1923 when the Viceroy Lord Irwin visited, the arrangements were once again so superb that the then Prime Minister of Hyderabad Nawab Faridul Mulk said, "I have been here for ever so many years and I have never seen such excellent arrangements and what is more people have not been put to any kind of inconvenience. Usually people were made to wait for hours together till they could pass a street".

Slowly and gradually young Reddy with sheer dint of his extraordinary perseverance and unusual integrity held a series of important positions and topped his career with the highest position in the Police Department of Nizam's Dominions. Even after retirement His Exalted Highness, the Nizam gave him other equally important offices such as the Directorship of his private estates (Saraf-e-Khas). There was not a district in which he had not worked. He was proficient in Telugu, Urdu, Arabic and Persian. It is heartening to here that how like a school boy,

he started learning English at the age of 60, when he heard that the Prince of Wales was visiting Hyderabad, for he was wondering as to how he would manage without knowing the language of English, for he knew that he might have to say a few words to the Prince – when he was asked to make the necessary arrangements. It speaks volumes about his personality for he worked hard and did succeed in learning the fundamentals of the language. It was said that when the Prince actually did arrive, he not only made all the security arrangements but became friendly with the Prince, who called him and said that he did not know Urdu and Venkatarama Reddy did not know English and yet he said that they would manage, so they conversed with each other for fifteen minutes !

When Gandhiji visited Hyderabad he had a programme at the Khadi Exhibition Society but Sir Trench passed a prevention order and Gandhiji was deeply upset over this and wanted to cancel his engagement and leave the city immediately, But Venkatarama Reddy intervened and appealed to the Mahatma not to leave but to fulfil his engagement.

In 1929 on the birth day of the Nizam, Venkatarama Reddy was honoured with the title of Raja Bahadur and it is no exaggeration, that the entire State celebrated it.

During this period Reddy was meeting the Nizam almost every day and taking his orders. He would see that he fulfilled the Nizam's orders. It was not easy to please the Nizam and yet he succeeded in this. So much so every time when his time came for retirement H. E. H. would extend it by a year or so,

In 1931 in view of his excellent services the British Government too had honoured him with an O. B. E. *

* O.B.E. ; George the V. by the grace of god, of great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India and Sovereign of

Reddy was flooded with honours and invaluable gifts. He was the recipient of King George V Gold Medal for his meritorious services.

The Prince of Wales – and many a Viceroy and the Prince of Berar gave him costly presents such as diamond and golden buttons, silver cigar cases, golden and silver clocks. All these only indicate with what love and affection they held Venkatarama Reddy.

Again in 1925 he was given another extension. He was then 65 years. People were very happy indeed. The history of the Police by Mir Vilayat Hussain in Urdu said ever since Reddy became the Kotwal there have been ever so many changes towards regular discipline. Reddy, because of his long experience and universal popularity, was able to control the entire department that there never has been an incident. Despite the many religious outbursts every where in India - Reddy has been successfully preventing such outbursts in Hyderabad.

the most excellent Order of the British empire, to our trusty and well beloved Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy greeting, whereas we have thought fit to nominate and appoint,

You to be an officer of the Division of our said, most excellent Order of the British Empire we do by these presents grant unto you the dignity of an officer of our said order and hereby authorise you to have hold and enjoy the said dignity and rank of an officer of our force – said order together with all and singular privileges there unto belong or appertaining.

Given at our Court at Saint Jame's under our sign manual and the seal of our said order this fifteenth day of December, 1930 in the 21st year of our lord.

By the Sovereign's command
Sd/- Edward I
Grand Master

He retired in 1933. He should have got Rs. 750/- as pension but H.E.H. in virtue of his excellent services ordered that the pension should be a 1000 rupees.

Even after his retirement Venkatarama Reddy was as active as usual for he had espoused ever so many public causes.

He was a member of the Legislature. He had the reputation of studying every law that was to be passed and would give his invaluable advice:

He was not merely an efficient Police Chief but his name was closely associated with many a social service organisation, and contributed immensely to it. He earned enormous sums of money and a great part of these went to support many a social service cause. He collected a huge sum of money for the Reddy Hostel which he founded in Hyderabad.

He devoted much of his time to another important cause namely education, particularly women's education. He supported the establishment of a girls school with Telugu medium and a large Library for which again he had collected princely donations. The Telugu School has now blossomed into an important women's College.

More than all this he was kind and considerate to people and went out of his way to help the truly needy. His impartiality, his rare qualities of sympathy and benevolence had made him a unique personality whose memory will be kept ever-green.

A word about his family—Venkatarama Reddy got married to Rangamma when he was quite young. The couple had two sons and a daughter. His son Ranga Reddy became an Abkari Deputy Commissioner and his other son Lakshma Reddy went to England and returned as a barrister who later became a High Court Judge.

Andhra Kesari Tanguturi Prakasam

(1872 – 1957)

Prakasam's is a name to conjure with so far as the Andhras are concerned and a household word in the land of the Telugu speaking people that spells great sacrifice and unbounded love for people. For about thirty five years he reigned supreme in the politics of South India and in particular that of Andhra.

He was an idol of the masses who admired him, adored him and almost deified him for his sense of selflessness and sacrifice. Looking like a Roman Senator he strode across the political scene in his national dress, like a colossus. His indomitable courage of conviction and concern for all became almost proverbial. He was neither communal nor chauvinistic and did not surround himself with a group of admirers as some politicians do. Even in his own day he was a peerless politician.

Prakasam was born in a middle class Niyogi Brahmin family on May 23rd 1872 at the village of Kanuparti, Ongole taluk. His father, a karnam of the village, was rather well to do in the beginning, as he had inherited some landed property of 40 acres which was spent on marriages of his two daughters; but the rest of it somehow was lost in course of time. He had three daughters and two sons and, as ill luck would have it, he passed away in 1884 when Prakasam was a lad of hardly 12 years old. Prakasam had two elder sisters who were already married; still there was a brother of eight years old, sister of four and his youngest brother was a posthumous child. Needless to mention that the whole responsibility of bringing up the family fell on his poor and forlorn mother who had no other alternative but to run a small restaurant to eke out her existence.

In this gloomy period of stress and strain, says Prakasam in his autobiography, he came in contact with a teacher in Mission School at Ongole, Mr. Immaneni Hanumantha Rao Naidu who was deeply interested in dramatic arts. Seeing young Prakasam's histrionic talents he was not only drawn to him but got quite attached to him and took adequate care of him by bringing him up like his own son. When Mr. Naidu left Ongole for Rajahmundry to become the headmaster of a small Middle School, his devoted young friend Prakasam also left with him for Rajahmundry leaving his mother and family in Ongole.

The departure to Rajahmundry is a milestone in his career. He finished his V Form at Ongole and he joined the High School with a scholarship at Rajahmundry; and life there was quite fascinating to young Prakasam for his interest in the stage had not abated. He was applauded for the great roles he enacted mostly female parts, which were said to be superb. This had brought him in contact with many people at Rajahmundry and doubtless had also involved him in many a dispute!

Rajahmundry was an important town in the whole of Andhra then; it was the seat of social reform; great writers like Veeresalingam and Vaddadi Subbarayadu were there. Great Sanatanists like Kokkonda Venkatratnam who was the Telugu Pandit at Presidency College, Madras was there, the great novelist and playwright Chilkamarti was there. It was his plays like "Gayopakhyanam" and "Keehakavadha" in which Prakasam played the parts of Arjuna and Draupadi and got all laurels. Many of the leaders of the town went into raptures over Prakasam's histrionic talent. Chilkamarti himself praised the youngman's talent as something marvellous.

At Rajahmundry, Prakasam was drawn to two great men at the time, one Mr. Metcalf, the popular and well-known educationist who was the Principal of the Government Arts College, Rajahmundry where he was studying, for his liberal views and Kandukuri Veeresalingam, the great Telugu scholar and great

social reformer for his untiring tirade against ignorance, superstition and meaningless orthodoxy. As he admired them, he imbibed many a worthy trait from them which were to stand him in good stead in years to come.

In 1889 he passed his Matriculation Examination. He was looking for a job. It was at that time his sister Janakamma passed away and her daughter Hanumayamma was married to him. Prakasham finished his F. A. at Rajahmundry and went to Madras to qualify himself as a Second Grade Pleader. Then he was prevailed upon by his relatives to set up his practice at Ongole, his home town. But he established his legal practice at Rajahmundry for he did not want to leave Hanumantha Rao Naidu.

Leading politicians those days, prior to their political careers, sought experience with the Municipality; for instance Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Pandit Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, before they entered politics, were municipal councillors and mayors. Similarly Prakasam sought to work in the local Municipality where he was elected as Municipal Councillor in 1900. Subsequently he became the Chairman of the Rajahmundry Municipality in 1903.

His administration was marked with a spirit of independence, fearlessness and impartiality which traits persisted all along his career and made him so popular. He turned down bravely many an application for land which were cases of encroachments of municipal land. The applicants were highly influential men of the day, but he was impartial in his judgement and treated every one alike. This had brought him a number of enemies doubtless, but he did not care.

Prakasam was broadminded and was secular in his attitudes for he never associated himself with any community. A muslim butcher had applied for permission to start a tannery there. The ward councillor did not recommend the case, although Prakasam was not directly concerned with the ward, granted

the request. In another instance when the Hindus appealed to him objecting to the construction of a mosque in the town, he saw that permission was given to the Muslims. He was similarly kind and helpful to the depressed and down-trodden. He was strict and punished the faulty and tried to raise the efficiency of the workers. Within the short period of three years that he was at the Municipality, he turned in a good number of works that were beneficial to all the citizens of Rajahmundry. He was kind to his subordinates but all the same very strict with them.

Prakasam during this period was an admirer of the British and their ways. He wanted to be like them in certain things. He was not content with what he was doing, although he had started well and was progressing in his field by earning more steadily. He had brought his family from Ongole to Rajahmundry and they were all living together. His work at the municipality was laudable. He wanted to go to England to qualify himself for bar. Accordingly in 1904 he left for England, for further studies in law.

While in England he met some distinguished Indians who were there. Dadabhai Naoroji was a member of the British Parliament. Prakasam was one of those who helped in his elections for a seat in the Parliament. He met C. R. Reddy who was doing his tripos. Before he returned to India he travelled extensively in Europe.

He qualified himself with distinction getting a prize of £ 50. After returning to India Barrister Prakasam shifted to Madras where he set up his practice, As a matter of fact his family wanted him once again to start his life afresh at Ongole, but he decided in favour of Madras.

There were at the time some lawyers of repute at Madras like Bhashyam Iyengar, Krishna Iyer, Vepa Ramesam, Purnam Nagabushanam, Alladi, S. Vardachari, I. R. Venkatarama Sastri

Sreenivasa Iyengar; Prakasam had to compete with all of them. It was no ordinary task. However he was not new to his profession, he has had ten years of legal experience in District Courts and he soon picked up good practice. From 1907 to 1921 his practice reached a pinnacle in the High Court. The first half of this period was spent in getting himself adjusted to life in Madras and with the other lawyers; and in the other half he built lucrative practice and earned enormous amounts of money and lived in great affluence.

It was during this time that he went to London in connection with a Privy Council case, where he met Gandhiji for the first time. His legal jurisdiction extended from Vishakapatnam in the North to Trichnapaly in the South. He was able to clear all his debts. It was said all the Zamindars of Northern circars and their cases went to Prakasam. Maganti Bapineedu's sister's property claims case alone had fetched him Rs. 70 thousand for she had won in the case; he had many such that brought him enormous wealth. He had innumerable cases in the District Courts too where again he had made a good deal of money with which he had bought valuable immovable properties such as a house in Madras, one in Ongole, one in Rajahmundry and one in Ooty.

Prakasam became thus an important citizen of Madras Presidency and a lawyer to reckon with.

India at the time was going through troublous times. There was the vehement National struggle. Great men like Pandit Motilal Nehru in U. P., Chittaranjan Das in Bengal, Annie Besant in Madras, Arabinda Ghosh were devoting their invaluable time to fighting for freedom.

Although Prakasam was a very busy lawyer, he was not unaware of the national struggle that was going on at the time in the country. He attended the Surat Congress in 1907, when some of the leading representatives of Andhra like Nyapati Subba Rao, Kopalle Hanumantha Rao, Gadicharla

Harisarvothama Rao and others were involved deeply in the Movement. Tilak, the extremist leader and moderates like Surendranath Benerji, Pheroz Shah Mehta and Lajapat Rai were each agitating for their stand in the Congress. Both the sections had a serious session and ultimately there was a split in the Congress.

However in 1919 Gandhiji's call had made Prakasam once for all decide and join the Congress fold. There was the Montague Chelmsford reforms, the Khilafat agitation and the enactment of some laws which were so repressive that Gandhiji issued his "Satyagraha Pledge" in February 1919. Prakasam readily gave up his lucrative practice and signed the Pledge. From now on Prakasam had started taking active part in politics.

The annual meeting of the Congress was held at Amritsar when the Montford reforms were taken up and Gandhiji wanted to accept them. Whereas Tilak and C. R. Das wanted to reject them as they felt they were inadequate. Prakasam, although was with Tilak, argued for a middle course and the Congress finally resolved that even though the reforms were unsatisfactory they were prepared to accept them. But before they could work them out, the Congress leaders were quite upset and alarmed over the Government's policy of repression that Tilak and Gandhiji issued their respective manifestoes explaining their policies to the members.

Prakasam had emphasised on the need for linguistic provinces for without this there could not be genuine provincial autonomy. Administration should be conducted in the language of the State and that was possible only with the formation of linguistic states.

Prakasam with Tilak was emphatic on the organization of the working class and for a better deal for them. He, in fact, wanted a labour party to be organised like that of the British.

Prakasam was mainly thinking in early days on the lines of Tilak. But when Gandhi announced his programme of Non-cooperation the whole country, let alone the leaders of various view-points, was agog with this question. Tilak was not in favour of it. C. R. Das and other nationalists opposed it, but ultimately the special congress that met in 1920 finalised it in favour of non-cooperation and every one agreed to support it.

Tilak passed away on the very day on which it was planned to be lunched.

From then on Prakasam became a staunch supporter of Gandhiji and his programmes. He worked relentlessly by touring in Andhra Districts and explaining the Congress policies and the meaning of Non-cooperation to the people.

It was at this time after the arrest of Gandhiji that at the successive meetings of the Congress at Lucknow, Gaya and later at Calcutta, Congress was split into two sections, one for change and the other for status quo. So the Prochangers and the no-changers had come into being. The former was supported strongly by C. R. Das and other leading nationalists. Prakasam in the meanwhile who was elected as the President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee and a member of the All India Congress Working Committee in 1922 threw his weight at those conferences in making all the delegates from Andhra support "No changers". The "No-changers" defeated the "Pro-changers." This shows what a staunch Gandhiite Prakasam had been. From now on, one could see how loyal Prakasam had been to Gandhiji and his programmes. He proved himself a champion of all Gandhiji's programmes, because his one concern was unity of Congress and everything else was subordinate to it for this he worked incessantly throughout his association with the Congress and yet as irony would have it, this very unity for which he strove hard, Prakasam says, in this autobiography, seemed to have gone against him, for, ever since the pro-change and no-change controversy had taken place perhaps due to his over enthusiasm, there were strained relations between Gandhiji and himself.

In 1926 S. Sreenivasa Iyengar a good friend of Prakasam was elected President of Congress.

Since 1922 there had been a lull in the Congress activities although there were controversies in the annual meetings of the Congress whether to accept entry into the Legislature or not. They agreed upon entry. In the meanwhile the visit of Simon Commission in 1928 once again brought about a spectacular national activity in Madras Presidency. There was a remarkable organisation to boycott the Commission's visit and the part played by the leaders like Sreenivasa Iyengar, Satyamurty and Prakasam of Madras was spectacular. There were controversial reports in regard to the happenings on the day of the Commission's arrival.

In this connection legendary stories were circulated of Prakasam's courage and prowess - how "he bared his chest to the bayonets of the British soldiers" !

Prakasam while following implicitly the programmes of Congress has had his independence throughout. In 1929 when the Congress decided to boycott Legislative Councils, he was opposed to it, as he quite rightly pointed out that that was done just to please some influential members like Motilal Nehru who got disgusted with the councils. So he felt that membership in the councils was important as it would help in their propaganda. So in accordance with the Congress resolution, he resigned his membership from the Council. But he resigned from the Congress and contested the by-election as an Independent candidate to the vacancy caused by his own resignation. This was condemned by Andhra.

Again in 1919 Congress went back upon its earlier decision for, while strengthening its Non-Cooperation, members remained in the Council. Prakasam again resigned his Independent membership to join the 'Salt Satyagraha' in Andhra. He may have been correct in his assessment of the situation but his resignation from the party was never appreciated.

Prakasam was associated for years with journalism. He was not a journalist in the true sense of the term. But the fact remained that he ran a paper called the 'Madras Lawyers Journal' as early as in 1912-1916.

Later in order to serve the Congress and Andhra he started a daily Newspaper 'Swarajya' for which he had sacrificed all his resources and established it into a Limited Company and got many shareholders. The latter gave huge sums more as donations to a national cause rather than investment. For Prakasam himself says 'The Swarajya Company although a limited one, was treated by the Public as my own company, in which I enjoyed the fullest authority to dictate among other things the editorial policy of the paper as well'.

The paper had become so popular right from its inception that it gained a large circulation. It had become one of the leading journals in India for it carried not only upto date news but good articles by well known national leaders. Further it was so efficiently run that it became the Congress' foremost organ that did earnest propaganda in publicising all the activities of the Congress clarifying to the public the underlying principles and policies of the Congress. Motilal Nehru also bought shares and it served the Congress loyally for years in propagating the programmes of the Congress.

And whenever Prakasam had differences with the Congress programmes, Swarajya unhesitatingly took them up and discussed them vehemently. There were occasions when Rajagopalachari and Prakasam had differences in regard to Congress policies which again were taken up by the Swarajya. Gandhiji was apparently reported about this and he asked Prakasam unceremoniously to close down the paper without giving any reasons.

Prakasam explained the difficulty involved in suddenly closing a huge concern like 'Swarajya' and moreover, in his opinion, it was doing extremely good work. But Gandhiji

insisted that that it should be closed down without giving any reasons for his insistence. The courageous Andhra leader said that he could not close down the daily for the same consideration which influenced Gandhiji in South Africa to refuse to close his "Indian opinion" weighed with him in his determination to continue his paper.

However after this incident he had endless trouble with Rajaji whose initial interest in the paper, dwindled into animosity. No one knew the reason as to why Gandhiji had taken that attitude. A director of Swarajya daily said that it was Rajaji who had prejudiced Gandhiji. Further Rajaji suddenly asked Prakasam to refund the amount of Rs. 10,000 that he had given to Swarajya earlier from the Congress fund. Prakasam refused to pay as that amount was paid as a donation towards the Tamil edition of Swarajya that was being published. This was again referred to Gandhiji who once again supported Rajaji and said the amount had to be returned. This unfortunate harassment to Prakasam continued even after he had gone to jail; for when he was serving his sentence his creditors got hold of all the assets of Prakasam including his press for which Prakasam had not only spent his all but put in about 12 lakhs that was collected. In a short while it was going to be independent but this had happened. After he returned from the jail he tried to revive it but he could not. After 14 years of good work it was closed down in 1935. It was considered the best of the nationalist papers. Even C. R. Das was said to have been inspired by this and he started a daily called "Liberty".

In 1940 he started another paper a Weekly this time in English which had its Telugu and Tamil versions called the "Village Republic". This was a small venture when compared with Swarajya. Prakasam says in regard to the object of this paper, "Educating the masses and also the classes on the lines that should be adopted not only for reviving the ancient village republics but also to propagate the idea of establishing the

republican system in towns and cities as well with village republics as the foundation. In other words, to place before the public the need for converting the existing centralised system into a decentralised one".

This paper "Praja Patrika" ran for one year from 1952-1953. Another weekly was started by him to fight the Congress Government whose rule had brought about corruption. Articles on scarcity of food, nepotism, inefficiency were published including the just claims of the Telugu people for a separate Telugu State.

In 1937 Congress came to power and Prakasam became a Revenue Minister in Rajaji's Government in the composite Madars. There was a strong feeling that if the High Command did not appoint the leader but had elections, Prakasam, who was a popular leader, would have become the Chief Minister. However Prakasam did many a beneficial thing to the State. He supported stoutly the zamin ryots. Under his chairmanship on the Zamindari Abolition Committee recommended that the personnel who worked in the fields should be the owners of the fields. A voluminous report came into being which was a stand for future guidance in this regard.

In 1946 Madras was ridden by power politics; there were four groups; one, Rajaji and his followers second; Kamaraj and his supporters; third Dr. Pattabhi and his men and lastly Prakasam and his group; and yet Prakasam was the choice for a leader by all. He represented the masses. But the High Command particularly Gandhiji somehow did not want Prakasam and told him clearly that he should neither become the Chief Minister nor a Minister. He should sit on the back bench. So Gandhiji tried his best to make Rajaji the leader although as irony would have it, Rajaji had not only resigned from the Congress Working Committee and later even from the Congress for, in 1942, to the surprise of all, Rajaji individually pleaded in favour of the Muslim League's demand for the partition of the country. He passed a resolution recording his views on various controversial issues.

Many were at a loss to understand the mind of Rajaji. The High Command including Gandhiji condemned it.

Now despite all this, the High Command insisted on Rajaji becoming the leader. The Congress leaders of the Committees representing Tamil and Kerala were adamant in refusing to accept the leadership of Rajaji. Gandhiji dissuaded Dr. Pattabhi, who was a possible candidate set up by Dr. Bezwada Gopala Reddy and Kala Venkat Rao, and Prakasam from contesting for leadership. Despite the High Command's opposition to Prakasam, the latter was elected the leader but unfortunately since he had not the blessings of the High Command particularly Gandhiji's he could not continue as the Chief Minister for long. After a period of about thirteen months he was compelled to leave. It must be said here in justice to Prakasam that within this short time in spite of stout opposition and ministerial manoeuvrings he was able to give good administration. He fearlessly placed before the High Command that some of the ministers were corrupt and that he wanted the High Command to take action against them; but nothing came of it. He was persistently asking the High Command for action in this regard. On the other hand the tables were turned and Gandhiji had brought charges against Prakasam at the instance of Kala Venkat Rao who misrepresented to the High Command that Prakasam accepted public purses presented to him for personal use.

The truth was that the Andhra Public gave personal purses to Prakasam after he had lost his ail for "Swarajya" daily that completely ruined him economically. People in Andhra and Madras knew how much he had suffered and sacrificed for the national cause by not only giving up a lucrative practice but donating all his wealth to the cause. Prakasam by nature was not one to care for money. He spent every pie on his newspaper the "Swarajya". So people who loved this honest leader gave him purses on many an occasion with a specific desire that it was for his personal use. His enemies made this into a capital issue till they were told the truth. Yet Gandhiji had collected funds earlier to clear C. R. Das' debts. It was a known fact

that public raised funds for Tilak to fight his case against Valentine Chirol. Many leaders spent public funds on themselves.

However the High Command could do nothing for when the one man Commission was appointed to look into the affairs in Madars with particular reference to the charges against Prakasam, it was found that all the charges against Prakasam were false. In regard to the charges framed against the ministers in his cabinet for corruption, not only nothing was done in this regard, but they were again appointed as ministers in the Omandur Ramaswami Reddi's ministry that followed Prakasam's. The latter felt that this was a great injustice on the part of High Command, so he resigned from the Congress and formed another party called the "Praja Party".

As a Chief Minister he remained in Office only for a short period and within this short time he brought in a number of revolutionary reforms-Harijan uplift, "charkha"(spinning wheel), popularisation of Producer-cum-Consumer Cooperatives and Firkha Development Schemes. The latter is judged as a potential of community development project that was later introduced into rural India.

The Telugu speaking people have been agitating for a separate State for the last forty years. Prakasam played no small role in this, but the self-immolation of Potti Sreeramulu on December 15, 1952 expedited the cause. Prakasam gave a worthy and constructive lead to the agitation and on October 1, 1953 the Andhra State came into being. The High Command prevailed upon Prakasam to be the first Chief Minister of this new State.

Within the one year of his administration he brought in many a benefit for the State. One of the largest irrigation projects, the Nagarjunasagar, a High Court for the new State, and a new University at Tirupati. came into being. He bravely declared a general amnesty for about 2000 condemned criminals all over the State to mark the State's first anniversary in 1954.

In 1957 Andhra Kesari, as he was rightly called, the courageous hero of Andhra passed away on May 20, 1957 in his eighty-fifth year at Hyderabad. As one of his close contemporaries had observed :

“A reckless indifference to consideration of personal advantage and safety, undaunted courage of conviction and a very genuine and sturdy patriotism are the main characteristics of Sri Prakasam’s personality and they had won for him an enviable pre-eminence in public life”.

Sir Kurma Venkata Reddi Naidu

(1875 – 1940)

Caste system in India, particularly in South India, corroded the body politic. In fact it ate into the very vitals of our life system. People for generations, took this obnoxious system, as a matter of course and the victims have been unquestioningly taking it lying low.

Great reformers were not wanting who appeared from time to time, right from Lord Buddha down to Mahatma Gandhi who spoke vehemently against the system. In fact many of them broke away from Hinduism on this score and yet the system has remained to a great extent unshaken for it is so deep rooted.

It was in this context that Sir Kurma played an unforgettable role and did all that he could not only to get away from the unhappy reactions of the system, but to see that it did not affect the entire Non-Brahmin Community in South India in regard to their education and public services.

To see to this the Justice Party was founded in Madras and stalwart founder-members like Dr. T. M. Nair, Sir Pitti Thyagaraja chetty were there, but it was given to Sir Kurma to pursue doggedly in the direction.

It was unfortunate that Sir Kurma was all along a much misunderstood man, although his statements and public speeches were crystal clear in regard to his motives; yet his opponents felt that he was there to destroy the Brahmins. The following statement from one of his speeches makes the point clear : “This charge is as false as it is frivolous. We have no hatred towards

anybody. We only wish to safeguard our interest. We are trying to uplift ourselves not to injure others. We attack the system, the existing system of franchise for the legislative institutions; we have no complaint against any individual or community. Our complaint, if at all, is against the Government, for not having had the prescience to foresee the consequences that might naturally follow the system, they introduced in 1892 and 1909. These consequences no doubt did not prove to be very serious. But when the proposal is to enlarge the Legislative Councils enormously and when large powers of administrative control and taxation are sought to be given to these Councils, it is only natural that those who would be affected by these powers should apprehend danger and insist upon safeguards being provided against possible abuse of these powers".

Further this point was elaborated at a Non-Brahmin Conference where Sir Kurma said, "What they understood by the Non-Brahmin Movement was that it was a movement for the uplift of the Non-Brahmins. The movement has got a social and political side, but most emphatically it did not aim at bringing the Brahmins down to a lower level. The Non-Brahmins did not grudge the position which the Brahmins had secured in the contry by their habits of close application and unremitting industry. The non-Brahmins in fact admired the Brahmins in these respects. What the non-Brahmins however wanted was that they should occupy a position in the country analogous to that of the Brahmins (Applause). It might be that it would take a long time to achieve this, but achieve it, they must and they would. It may be readily granted that the Brahmins fully deserved the position they hold in the country; but if they felt jealous of the non-Brahmins and they envied the non-Brahmins, then Brahmin supremacy should be assailed. The Brahmins had absolutely no fear from the non-Brahmin Movement and any attempt to thwart it would spell disaster to the Brahmins".

It was from this plank that Sir Kurma incessantly worked and rose to the highest position of a Governor of the State and

continuously held one important position after another which enabled him to fight for the cause, to which he was dedicated. He had made a study of the question and had his facts and figures on the tip of his fingers, which none could challenge.

It would be a gross mistake if we think that Sir Kurma was only interested in this. He was both a Liberal and a Democrat. Added to this he was quite modern in his views. His speeches if read even today breathe so much of modernity and have a relevance to our problems now. The issues he dealt with whether Agriculture or Industry or Education or Defence, his ideas sparkle with freshness and uptodateness.

Sir Kurma was a fine speaker who used to make a thorough study of the subject before he delivered his speech. Nature had not only endowed him with a pleasing personality that had good looks with attractive features and a fine figure but had sharp brains to answer difficult questions on the spur of the moment with accuracy and precision. This he must have acquired after some years of practice in law, that had made him one of the leading lawyers at Eluru.

Kurma Reddi Naidu was born in a middle class Kapu family at Rajahmundry although his forbears were pretty rich owning a couple of villages called Gangavaram and Kurmapuram in the Ramachandrapuram Taluk of the Godavari District. It is said that one of his paternal ancestors, Sambhanna Naidu served as a military officer on the side of the English against the Dutch towards the end of the 18th century and earned the title of Commandant (Kumandan) which became a family appellation. His father Bapanna Naidu was in the Police Service; his mother Venkataratnamma was a pious lady devoted to religion.

He had his schooling both in Rajahmundry and Madras where he joined the Men's Christian College and graduated in Mathematics in 1894. Soon he joined the Rajahmundry Arts College and taught Statistics and Dynamics. This again he left to become an assistant in the Beard High School at Amalapuram. He married in 1896 Smt. Lakshmikantamma who bore him five children: two daughters and three sons. The sons were highly educated both in India and England and have been holding high positions in life. The daughters have been married into good and well-to-do families.

Sir Kurma, soon after his marriage, gave up his teaching position and went to Madras to do his law. After finishing his law course, he set up his practice first at Rajahmundry and then at Eluru, where, as was the fashion of all ambitious and public-spirited people those days, he took active part in Municipal administration. He was a member of the Municipal Council and in course of time became the acting Chairman of the Council. He was also elected to the Presidency of the Polavaram Taluk Board and the Godavari District Board. He devoted a good bit of his time and energy to public work while pursuing his profession of law in which he had an abiding interest. This sustaining interest, he recalls after years, when he visited Eluru as a Law Member and was happy when he was honoured there with a civic address and the City's Citizenship.

His public spiritedness was not content with his work at the Local Bodies. His energy needed more venues for work; so he attended the Indian National Congress meetings every year in the Districts and large cities like Calcutta and Madras and fully participated in their deliberations. He was a nationalist from 1901 to 1916 attending the Congress meetings and speaking at their conferences.

In regard to his stand in politics he had not yet come to a decision, for, after the Lucknow session, he had joined the new

Non-Brahmin Movement of which he soon became not only an ardent advocate, but its undisputed leader before long.

1919 was an important year for India as it marks the formulation and enactment of the famous Montford Reforms. The main feature of these Reforms was what was known as Dyarchy which divided "Provincial administration" into two, viz: "Transferred" which were placed, under control of popularly elected Ministers and the other "Reserved" under control of appointed Executive Councillors.

Sir Kurma was making a study of the Non-Brahmin movement with facts and figures. 40 out of 41½ millions of population in Madras Presidency were non-Brahmins and yet in public services the vast majority of them were Brahmins. Out of 140 Deputy Collectors in Madras at the time 77 were Brahmins, 30 Non-Brahmin Hindus and the rest were Muslims and Christians. Out of 128 permanent District Munsifs in 1913, 93 were Brahmins, 25 Non-Brahmin Hindus and the rest were Christians and Muslims, and Anglo-Indians. As for the competitive examinations in the Provincial Civil Service which were held between 1899 and 1904, out of 16 successful candidates 15 were Brahmins giving a ratio of 95% of Brahmin success. The ratio was more or less the same in regard to employment in the University, in local and other public bodies including the Legislative Council.

With such details, a Non-Brahmin manifesto was prepared showing the absolute monopoly of the Brahmins in public services with the counsel to the community that they be prepared and get themselves educated and wait for opportunities.

This manifesto was issued by the two pillars of the Organisation, Sir Pitty Thyagaraja Chetty and Dr. T. M. Nair who waited on the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India, when they visited Madras, along with other groups of Non-Brahmins.

Not only Madras, all India, surprisingly enough, had some major groups like the Sikhs in the Punjab and Lingayats in Mysore who were unfortunately the victims of some other groups. So they appealed to the British for justice.

While acceding to the request, the British said, interestingly enough, "Any general extension of the communal system, however, would only encourage still further demands and would, in our deliberate opinion, be fatal to that development of representation upon the national basis on which alone a system of responsible government can possibly be rooted. We regard any system of communal electorates, therefore, as a very serious hindrance to development of the Self-Governing Principle".

In 1919 all political parties sent their representatives to England to give evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee that was appointed to hear their views and submit recommendations to the Parliament. The Justice Party also sent its deputation with Dr. T. M. Nair as its leader and Reddi Naidu as a member. Unfortunately, within a week of their arrival in England, Dr. Nair fell seriously ill and passed away. So the mantle of leadership fell on the shoulders of Reddi Naidu who had to make a special study of the problem and give evidence.

But recalling this sorrowful predicament, Reddi Naidu said in moving words that how they were shaken by the unexpected tragedy, "I cannot describe to you the hopes with which we went to England and the position in which we found ourselves within a week after our arrival. We went as mere lieutenants to that great man, the founder of this movement, the founder of the real democratic movement in this country, the late Dr. Nair. But to our great sorrow we found that he was sinking".

Reddi Naidu had to write a long memorandum of fifty-four paragraphs and give personal evidence to the British Joint Committee.

After he returned from England Reddi Naidu was nominated to the Legislative Assembly. Added to this responsibility, he has now to tour and make electioneering speeches. His articulateness not only brought more admirers to the fold but he became an undisputed speaker. To sample one, "For ages we have suffered. Foreign aggression, priestly oppression, caste domination and enforced ignorance have all robbed us of our birth-rights. We have been ignored, ill treated, oppressed, victimised. But our cause is just and great. Tyranny and oppression cannot last for ever. The time will come, when it must end. Perhaps we see the dawn of it already. Our freedom, our liberty, our emancipation is within sight. All great causes however demand heavy sacrifices. The blood of the martyr is the vitalising seed not only of the Church but also of the country. Sloth and slumber never won a fortune. Work, ceaseless work, discreet and disinterested work, conscious and courageous work alone can achieve the goal. So, my sisters and brothers, awake, arise and gird up your loins".

The Justice Party was returned with a thumping majority and the Rajah of Panagal as the first minister, Dewan Bahadur A. Subbarayalu Reddiar as second minister and Rao Bahadur K. Venkatarreddi Naidu as the third Minister were chosen. Reddi Naidu was in charge of Agriculture, Cooperation, Industries and Fisheries.

Reddi Naidu had been travelling extensively while he was a minister and made invaluable statements, mostly liberal. For instance, "the population of Brahmins is only 3%; yet we are prepared to let them have 20 or 25%; or even a larger share in the administration of the province. We only want our share in the administration".

When the Congress was working for complete Independence, the Justice Party wanted Home Rule long after they had settled their communal disharmonies. He said "There is not a single person in this country who does not take Swaraj in the

sense I defined it and who does not like his own native land to be ruled by his own countrymen”.

During the three years of his stewardship, Reddi Nadu did a tremendous lot of work that was applauded. The Ministry of Development published this with facts and figures, showing the number of cooperative societies or the financing banks that were there in 1921 and the large increase made in 1923. Reddi Naidu was knighted in June that year.

From 1923-28 Sir Kurma had no specific position although he was extremely busy with work pertaining to various institutions. He was a member of the Senate of Madras and Andhra Universities. He was a member of the Madras Law College Council. He was the chairman of the Court of visitors to the Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore. He was a special lecturer on Constitutional Law at the Madras Law College. He was the Chairman of the Madras Fisheries Committee. So he had a handful of responsibilities. He was appointed by the Government of India a delegate to the League of Nations at Geneva in 1925.

He was quite impressed with this World Organisation and he let the people know it on his return from Geneva at various meetings.

In 1929 he was appointed as Agent-General to the Government of India in South Africa. During the three years' stay there, Sir Kurma did a marvellous job of his work. One of the local papers the "Rand Daily Mail" wrote "By the departure of Sir Kurma Reddi, the Indian community of South Africa has lost a sincere friend who has always strenuously upheld their cause. Sir Kurma also won the cordial esteem of European section of the population by his unfailing tact and moderation and his outstanding social qualities" All the newspapers wrote kind words of esteem and praised his work there.

Sir Kurma had an occasion to write to Mahatma Gandhi during his stay there. Sir Kurma's biographer says, in regard to

this "in reply to a communication from Sir Kurma Mahatma Gandhi wrote a letter in his own hand which reveals the extent to which each of them could sink their political differences in furtherance of a common national cause". It is interesting to read Gandhiji's letter to Sir Kurma.

Dear friend,

I thank you for your very friendly letter. I have been delayed in replying to it, owing to my peregrinations and then illness from which, by the grace of God, I am recovering. I do hope that the trade licence matter has been or will be satisfactorily settled. I continue to receive anxious enquiries from South Africa. I am obliged to tell them all that they should worry you and not expect much from here. However, when you think that intensive work here will assist you, you will please tell me.

The news you give me about matters educational is most encouraging. The success of Shastri College must, in the end, go a long way towards raising our status in South Africa.

I know how true you are when you tell me about our peoples apathy in matters in which they are expected to exert themselves. I knew, even in my time, the difficulties of the poor vegetable hawkers. It was their amazing industry that I thought enabled them to walk long distances early in the morning and dispose of, in the best manner they could, their produce before 9 A. M. May success attend your effort on their behalf.

Thank you for interesting yourself in Manilal and his wife. I hope they are helpful.

Sabarmati
20-8-22.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd) M. K. Gandhi

Greater honours awaited Sir Kurma on his return from South Africa. He went to England to represent the claims of the Andhras of Berhampore and Parlakimidi before the British Parliament.

He became the Law member of the Madras Government from 1934-37. He became the acting Governor of Madras when Lord Erskin went to England on leave. The titles of K. C. S. I. and Honorary D. Litt. of the Andhra University were conferred on him in 1937. In the same year he became the first Chief Minister of Madras, under the Government of India Act 1935 and continued till the Congress Government took it over. Till the end of his life Sir Kurma held very high positions one after the other.

Apart from his distinguished positions and his invaluable individual contribution to every one of the portfolios he held, his views on one or two matters deserve special attention. For they make him democratic and modern. Their relevancy today cannot be questioned. They are on Military Defence and Industrialisation of our country.

Sir Kurma was deeply interested in the national defence of our country. He proposed the creation of a great Indian army, even prior to the 1st World War and emphasised during the war the urgent need for it.

Sir Kurma wrote an article to the "Madras Daily" on the "Recruitment in India". He was anxious that a substantial Indian army should be raised. He took advantage of the suggestion and said that "ten to twelve new divisions of Indian troops to be ready to take the field in 1917. The suggestion itself not new as India is in entire accord with Indian aspirations and wishes". Sir Kurma went on to say, "In the Madras Session of the Indian National Congress held in Decnmber 1914, soon after the war broke out, speakers on the resolution concerning military training and volunteers made the same suggestion".

But as usual Churchill raised his own objections. His attitude towards India is a well known fact. However, Sir Kurma said "To an Indian mind these objections are not unanswerable, nor are the difficulties pointed out insurmountable. The experience of the last twenty-two months must have convinced the British Statesmen and Generals that India will not shrink from any sacrifice that may be demanded of her. Her princes and people have admirably responded to the call of Great Britain in adding their quota to its resources, while Indian forces contributed largely to the much needed expansion of the military organisation of the Empire". Thus his whole article is a scientific analysis of the need for expansion of Indian Army and how urgently it was needed and so on.

On other occasions too Sir Kurma unhesitatingly was making a reasonable plea for this. The importance of this subject cannot be overrated even to day for, as a matter of fact, the defence of the country and particularly its borders, we need a strong and well trained army.

As for industrialisation of the country Reddi Naidu was positive that it was industrialisation alone that was going to liquidate poverty in our country. This has been one of his favourite subjects. He was not only making speeches but he strove hard, when he was the Minister of Development, to see that more industries were set up. In the account that was published to have an assessment of the work done by the various ministers it was said that "Sir Kurma ordered a reorganisation of the Industries Department reducing the number of divisions to three each under an Assistant Industrial Engineer working directly under the Industrial Engineer and he instituted enquiries on his own initiative concerning various industries, such as the preparation of Sulphuric acid, Rubber, Toy industry, Citric acid, Matches, Masulipatam Cotton-printing, Palmyra fibre, Sugar. Oil Mill and so on".

Speaking about the departments specially under his charge, he said "The Telugu Country, specially the Northern Circars, have

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not been too well up in the matter of industries. We are all agricultural people but agriculture alone will not do for us hereafter. The whole world is fast becoming more and more industrialised and unless we improve our industries and make our own things in proportion to the existing and growing needs of our country, unless we have, in short, our factories which will produce every thing that is now imported from foreign countries we cannot compete in the race of the world's progress".

Sir Kurma's one great desire was to see that India became an important country by solving all its internal problems such as caste, and other social problems, poverty, industrialisation, and a host of others and then achieve its independence.

In his 67th year in 1942 Sir Kurma took ill for a short time in Madras where he had gone from Annamalai University for a meeting of the syndicate held in Chettinad House over which he presided as the Vice-Chancellor and on the 5th September he should have left for Delhi for a meeting of the National Defence Council but he could not attend owing to his illness. On the 9th September he passed away.

A colourful career of great responsibilities came to an abrupt end. Madras and India sympathised with the family by its innumerable condolence meetings. The Governor of Madras said, "It is with great sorrow that I learned this morning of the death of Sir Kurma. It would be idle for one to recall all the many services he performed in his long career culminating in the Governorship of this Presidency; they are too well known. He never flagged in his devotion to the State or in his service to the people in war and peace and now you may well be proud that he was on the eve of taking up further patriotic work on the National Defence Council. My wife and I tender our deepest sympathy to you and your family. Madras has lost one of her best citizens and one whom it will be impossible to replace".

Several meetings of sympathy were held in South Africa where many an association joined and passed the following resolution - "Sir Kurma's tenure of office in South Africa was marked by his consummate skill and sagacity in dealing with the South African Indian problems. As a member of the Second Round Table Conference he had rendered meritorious service to the South African Indian community".

As his biographer says "thus ends the story of Sir Kurma Reddi Naidu who was every inch of his being a gentleman and a fighter, a citizen and a patriot of the finest order".

Kommaraju Venkata Lakshmana Rao

(1877 – 1923)

There is a tremendous urge for writing in some scholars and this urge becomes almost a kind of inspiration that eggs them on to literary activity. Even as the poets say that the muse enthuses them to compose genuine poetry, true writers are often inspired to write. To this class of men, Kommaraju Venkata Lakshmana Rao belongs. In the circumstances in which he was placed, any other person would have found no time or interest in cultivating his own mother tongue - Telugu. For he was in Maharashtra living with his sister and brother - in - law.

He was born in the village of Penugantuprolu in Nandigama Taluka. His father passed away when he was hardly three years old and his step-brother brought him up for some time. Later Kommaraju joined his sister Bhandari Achamamba whose husband Bhandari Madhava Rao was working in Nagpur. So Lakshmana Rao, when he joined his sister, began going to a school in Nagpur. Thus he had his schooling and also his collegiate education in Nagpur. He went to Morris College where he took his B. A. in Philosophy and Sanskrit and privately passed his M. A. from Calcutta University. His interest in philosophical and Sanskrit literature had been immense and made him do a good deal of research in them.

Having lived in Maharashtra, he had to study right from the beginning Marathi which language became almost his mother tongue. He studied Sanskrit too in which also he had done great research.

Even as student in F. A. class he had been contributing articles to various journals in Maharashtra. He had not forgotten his real mother tongue. Telugu. On the contrary he, with his sister, began to make a study of the language and slowly and gradually mastered it and began to write articles for Andhra Patrica and other Telugu magazines.

It is interesting to note that in the controversy that was raging at the time in regard to the location of Panchavati in Ramayana, whether it was in Andhra or Maharashtra, Lakshmana Rao participated in this controversy and proved with the help of the Moropant's writings in Marathi, that it was the Panchavati in Andhradesa.

His one great desire was to popularise studies in philosophy among his people. So he wrote in 1893 two articles in dialectic form on "Viswamu Yokka Virata Swaroopamu" and "Viswamu Yokka Balya Swaroopamu" and published them in a Telugu paper.

When he returned to Andhradesa, he was appointed Diwan of the Munagala Samasthanam where his forebears before him had been Diwans.

While managing the State well with his administrative ability, he had found time to devote to the cause of Telugu literature. In connection with certain legal affairs of the State he had to remain in Madras where again he had not ignored his first love, Telugu language and literature. Even the Raja of Mungala, fortunately for him, was a lover of literature and encouraged Lakshmana Rao to pursue his research and studies.

His one great ambition had been to set up a scientific educational book - publishing centre which he finally did call Vignana Chandrika Grandhamala. This concern published books on various important subjects such as Indian and Andhra History, Andhra Historical novels, great personalities like Ashoka and Abraham Lincoln, Botany, Zoology, Chemistry and Physics. Further he began to edit, on the lines of English encyclopaedia, what was known as "Andhra Vignana Sarvasvamu" in

Telugu alphabetical order in 1912-13. This was no ordinary endeavour for he had to devote not only his time and energy but face other difficulties, such as finance and critics' opposition.

He was able to complete only three volumes. This was the only first published encyclopaedia in any of the South Indian languages.

Lakshmana Rao has been an inspired writer. He, under the auspices of "Vignana Chandrika Grandha Mala" had published philosophical essays and prefaces and independent books on Sivaji, Hindu monarchs, Hindu era, the Muslim era besides most of the essays that come under the first letter of the Telugu Alphabet 'A'. His deep scholarship, added to his extraordinary quality of research, had made all this possible. "Abhignana Shakuntalamu," "Adharva Vedamu," "Advaitamu" "Alamkaramu" "Ashtadasa Maha Puranamulu" "Ashtadhyayi," were some of his published works.

He had started serialising Goutama's Nyaya System of philosophy into Telugu in Akkiraju Umakantham's Telugu "Vangmaya Patrika" which remained regrettably incomplete. All this endeavour speaks volumes about his immense knowledge of various subjects and his remarkable interest in this kind of work. His deep scholarship, added to his extraordinary quality of research, had made all this possible.

The style of his writing had the reputation of being the most simple. Even a layman could easily comprehend his essays. He had the talent of making even the most difficult facts intelligible through his simple, easy and lucid style.

Kommaraju's name will ever be remembered by posterity for two important factors: (1) His establishment of "Vignana Chandrika Grandha Mala" (2) His Telugu Encyclopaedia, although only three volumes have been published, is the first of its kind in the whole of South India.

Kavyakantha Ganapati Shastri

(1878 – 1936)

Ayyala Somayajula Ganapati Shastri, although not well known to many, has been one of our most remarkable men in this century. He was a wonder boy of his time. He was not only outstanding intellectually but absolutely marvellous in the display of his intellectual achievements, even when he was hardly a boy of ten years.

He was born in 1878 in a family of Brahmin religious poets in a village called "Kaluvarayi" in the Vishakapatnam District. His father Narasimha Shastri and mother Narasamma had, even before his birth, some symptoms of the greatness of the boy that was to be born. When he was ten years old, his mother passed away. And he became a marvel in his place for his prodigious ways were exhibited in his writings. He mastered at that age, the study of Astrology and the Mathematics of the Indian Calendar (Panchangam). In fact he had invented a new method of calculating days which was very much appreciated by Pandits and experts of Panchangam.

When he was 12 years old, he was married and he wrote numerous poems addressed to his girl-wife called "Bhringa Sandesam". When he was sixteen years old, he had become an outstanding poet and mastered the art of poetry and history and had written about them, which are unfortunately untraceable to day.

He received from his father what was known as a "Maha Mantra" which he wanted to put into practice, by doing a kind

of Tapas for which he set out on a journey to Nasik, Bhuvaneswar and other places where there were great temples. After travelling incessantly for a few years, he wanted to take to higher studies in Sanskrit. So in 1900, he went to Nava Dwipa in Bengal which was renowned for its ancient schools of Sanskrit and philosophy. There he had many an opportunity of displaying his poetic talent in Sanskrit. Pandits in Sanskrit were taken aback to see this young man not only reciting his own poetry, but composing invaluable pieces on the spot. His spontaneous flow of thought, lilting poems appealed to the assembled great Pandits who were astonished to see his talent and conferred on him the title of “Kavya Kantha” (the poetic voice) and honoured him greatly.

This was only the beginning of his marvellous poetic talent for in 1903 in Madras, entering into a contest with Narayan Sudershan, he astounded the audience by writing twenty five poems in six minutes and won the award of a gold bangle – a much coveted prize, for nobody before him nor since had performed a similar startling intellectual feat.

In 1902, he went to Arunachalam and there in the Shiva temple, he composed two hundred slokas in praise of Lord Shiva and people were as usual surprised to see this intellectual giant. He was appointed a teacher in Telugu and Sanskrit. He was there for one year and left for Vellore where, for a wonder, he stayed for about four years as Telugu Pandit. While the art of teaching pleased him his soul longed for independence. In pursuit of it, he travelled extensively and came across a recluse called Brahmana Swami whose years of silence in his prayers (Tapas) made him lose his voice. But, as the legendary story would have it, as he saw this young man Ganapati, the Swami is reported to have gained his voice and addressed him and later initiated him into old and effective ways of knowing the Ultimate Reality. From then on, Ganapati Shastri resumed his prayers (Tapas) and wrote an important volume called “Uma Sahasra” which gives details of the various intricacies of Mantra, Tantra, Japa and Tapa. This has been a unique book for

it has three phases of (Stuti) praise, Upanishad and poetic (Kavya) writing in a unique manner in a pleasing and descriptive way to rouse Bhakti. This has been an unparalleled book.

He felt by reading old Sanskrit literature that there must have been a direct or induced way by which one could get at the root of the meaning of Tapas by Mantra. The old Rishis must have had some sutra or way by which they were able to achieve the highest contact with Almighty. He practised this Tapas for a long time.

In order to understand through knowledge the nature of Tapas that was indulged in by ancient Rishis, there must have been some esoteric Sutra by which they were able to achieve many Siddhis, but were to understand the Ultimate Reality and commune with the Highest. So he wanted to achieve the same for which he started on his Tapas and had his communion with a deity called Ranuka. Later the rest of his life was spent in making his experiences known to the world. He wrote many an invaluable book. It is said that he had achieved in his life what ancient Rishis had achieved, "Kapala Bhedana siddhi".

His books contained praises (Stuti), sutras, critical analytic commentaries. He has taken from Rigveda, historical instances and symptoms that depict India's glory and written a book called "Bharata Vimarsha". Again his "Ramanagita" was even excelling Upanishads and Brahma sutras in depicting truth. He has been a prolific writer of 75 volumes. Unfortunately only four or five books have been published and some of them, as ill-luck would have it, are not even traceable.

In 1924 he joined the Congress and became the President of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee. That very year he left the organisation. He was so moved by the question of untouchability, that he wrote an essay supporting it with Shastric evidence that it was not allowed by Hindu philosophy called "Panchajana Charcha".

He passed away in 1936. His one great ambition was to achieve independence of the country by prayer. He believed in the efficacy of prayer for he wanted through the strength of prayer that would automatically convince the British to leave within an year.

He was called Vasishtha Ganapati Muni by people.

Kattamanchi Ramalinga Reddy

(1880 – 1951)

A few years ago one evening some eighteen to twenty Vice-Chancellors met in a festive-looking and gorgeously decorated garden for tea in the city of Nagpur where they had come for a conference. All honoured guests of the evening were deliberately scattered as heads of different tables so that the intellectual elite of Nagpur that had gathered would have the benefit of meeting and hearing them. But soon a crowd collected round one table wherefrom emerged peals of laughter that distracted the entire party that evening. I, quietly, slipped off to that table and I soon found myself rapturously listening to the ready-wit and riotous repartees of Dr. C. R. Reddy then the Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University.

In that short time of an hour and a half at the most, he dwelt on various subjects from Nagpur weather to national politics. There were other distinguished Vice-Chancellors from Benaras, Bombay and other places but Dr. Reddy seemed admittedly the outstanding figure of the evening. I wondered as to why a crowd of admirers always trailed his foot-steps particularly students and college professors.

The secret of this admiration seemed to lay in his powerful personality—and a distinguished one at that—distinguished in mind and even in appearance—a man of medium height who was meticulously careful in his dress. He brushed his thick wavy hair back with a middle parting and at the back of his spectacles were a pair of bright questioning eyes that seemed to take note of everything that was happening around. Some of us have

known him only as an elder but he must have been a smartly clad attractive looking man in his youth. His looks indicated that they have seen better days. The black birth-mark covering half of his right fore-head did not deter his looks. In fact the superstitious attributed his great career to this! He was born under the same star as his grand-father, C. Ramalinga Reddy, who was a great Sanskrit Scholar. He was named after him, This taxed him a good deal, says Dr. C. R. Reddy, in one of his Telugu booklets when he speaks about himself, that his teachers at school always compared him with his scholarly grand-father and embarrassed him by asking as to how he came to bear the name of a great scholar particularly when he did not do his lessons well.

A FIRST CLASS FIRST THROUGH OUT :

Ramalinga Reddy was born in Kattamanchi, a village in Chittoor District in 1880. His life at school in Chittoor and other youthful reminiscences are beautifully described by him in one of his Telugu essays. It gives us a glimpse of his brilliance although he does not, out of humbleness, speak of his bright career at the school. His prize poem story in Telugu "Musalamma Maranamu" was published in 1900 while he was yet a student at the Madras Christian College from where he graduated in 1901 with distinction, winning medals for Political Economy and Philosophy. With a Government of India Scholarship, he proceeded to Cambridge (England) for further studies. He easily distinguished himself as a first class student by winning Wright's prize in the very first year of his admission in 1903 and was the Exhibitioner of St. John College, Cambridge in a couple of years and crowned it by taking a first class in History Tripos in 1906.

Even as a student at Cambridge he was a reputed speaker and was ranked as a fine orator among his contemporaries. His ability as a debator was admired by all intellectuals of England at his time. As a consequence he was elected, the Vice-President of the Union of the Cambridge University, a rare honour indeed

to be conferred on any student. In fact he was the first Indian to have been elected to that office.

To listen to Dr. Reddy is an intellectual treat. He spoke like an English-man in choice English and correct accent with a delightful sense of humour. There was a freshness in his thought, fiery force and liveliness in his expression and a charm and glamour in his delivery. Few could really speak with such ease and perfect clarity as Dr. Reddy. His spell-bound audiences wished always that his speeches never came to an end. Such was the rapt attention with which they used to listen to him. Almost every sentence of his made one rollick with laughter. While deploring our weakness for praising everything of the past and of ancient origin, he once wittily said "I was one day talking to a friend of mine who was praising our ancients - I mean the Hindu ancients; I do not want to touch any other ancients; it is only with our own ancients that in these days of communalism, I can take some filial liberty-and he was telling me that our ancients knew everything and it was only we, their modern descendants, that were rotten to the core, wretched, weak, disunited and demoralised. According to him, our ancients knew everything except how to produce a decent posterity. shall we accept the old, because it is old, adopt the latest because it is the latest or shall we treat each idea and prescription on its merits and adopt or reject according as it suits or does not suit us" ?

As a conversationalist he was delightful. He could keep people thrilled for hours at an end without making them feel the passing of the time.

A MODERN EDUCATIONIST :

At the instance of the Gaokwar of Paroda, Dr. Reddy took a trip to U. S. A. in 1907 and travelled extensively studying the system of education obtaining there. On his return to India, he was appointed the Vice-Principal of the College at

Baroda which was the beginning of his educational career. After a couple of years he was invited to Mysore where he was offered an important position—Inspector General of Education—which he held till 1920 when he resigned to enter politics.

Dr. Reddy spent more years in the field of education than in political work. His independent outlook and frank criticism of things proved that he was less a party man than an independent nationalist. His broad mindedness is seen in his expression, "Let us admire excellence of every type and variety irrespective of party. What a sublime sentiment it is of Mayura, who in his "Surya Sataka", has described as the sublimest attribute of the sun that his rays fall with equal grace and tenderness on the land, sharp frowning peaks of mountains and on the soft lotus buds, greeting him with a blushing smile in the morning. In judging of politics and political parties and persons let us, after the manner of the glorious life-giving, life-enhancing sun, allow the benefit of the best possible interpretation to rest on every action that we feel obliged to criticise and on all persons and parties with whom we have differences and thus achieve grace, beauty, harmony and united strength in our public life for the sake of our country".

During his first ten years of his stay in Mysore, Dr. Reddy reoriented the educational system there and put it on a firm basis. He was the first Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University where he worked for seventeen years and introduced many a beneficial reform as was necessary. Under his able guidance and careful vigilance the young University has become an outstanding one today. His critical analysis of modern education and his recommendation for introducing reforms into our Universities formed the subject of many a speech he delivered under the auspices of various educational institutions.

POLITICAL THINKER:

Although Dr. Reddy did not make any mark in the political world, yet he was a great political thinker. While speaking about political ideas he once said, "There are three methods

of evolution of political ideas which we sometimes mix-up in our country. There is the speculative method. An idea is good in the abstract; therefore let us try to institutionalise it immediately. As an aspiration it has a value. As a leaven and an influence, it has a value. But if it made us unique and weak, it will have value only as an example to be avoided. Speculation may take another aspect viz. revival of an impossible past.

It is easy to appeal to masses on the basis of ancientry of national this and of national that, meaning the primitive this and the primordial that. I understand that some people are trying to solve the question of school-building by saying that holding classes under trees is a national way of having classes. I do not mind holding classes under a mango tree, if you are not anxious to see the mangoes there. Similarly open air schools can be recommended on modern grounds without dragging in ancientry. Can we carry ancientism further and say that it would be a fine tribute to our still more primordial ancestors, if we all take to dwelling in the trees and thus solve the housing problem? The most practical methods are the historical. What has been our process of history so far? Shall we adjust ourselves to that or shall we try to hold up history or reverse the engines" ?

Dr. Reddy's career in the field of Politics was short. He entered the Legislative Council of Madras twice representing the University Constituency and was of the Justice Party, working with the late Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetty. He soon made a name because of his brilliance and he stood in the public eye. His sharp wit and ready repartee and debating skill took him to the forefront as a well accomplished parliamentarian. His scintillating speeches in the council made him the cynosure of all eyes.

Speaking of eternal laws in politics for instance, Dr. Reddy once said "Human rights and powers have to be regulated by a logical consideration of the higher and more eternal laws. Drummond has said that there is a natural law in the moral

world which you can no more ignore without serious consequences than the laws of the natural world or of philosophy. We can defeat this party or that by organising, by rousing passions and prejudices. But can we defeat the inexorable law of historical Karma that will sooner or later work itself out? The moving finger writes and having written moves on and not all the flow of the votes of the world can obliterate one letter of that fateful writing. That is why whatever the form of government there is always a call on our part for reflection for honest criticism and the endeavour to weigh things in the eternal scales and give better lives. The ballot box is not the eleventh Avatar of Vishnu”.

His admirers and colleagues of the party looked forward to his achievements. Every one expected him to rise to the Cabinet rank. Instead, to the greatest surprise of all concerned, he revolted against the Justice Party and led the opposition against Panagal Ministry. His remarkable speeches in this connection are classic. His brilliant repartees are a treat by themselves. Speaking about Freedom in democracy at the time of election he said that “A vote is not constitutive of merit. It ought to be recognitive of merit. Let us not imagine that because we get a large number of votes, we are necessarily very good and great. It is a mistake to think that many votes bring in their train many virtues.” In this connection, speaking about the Nazi Government in Germany Sir Ramalinga Reddy said: “They do not have party election but what are called one list elections which are no elections. The Government proposes a list for what it calls a popular plebiscite. Voters have to say “Yes” or “No”, that is to say “Yes”. There are no alternative candidates, to be voted for. And if they do not vote for the Government candidates, they are given political education in Concentration Camps! I hope that kind of democracy does not spread beyond the frontiers of the Fatherland”.

Dr. Reddy associated himself soon with the Swarajya Party not with great success. After a few years he joined the Indian National Congress and did a good bit of active work.

He resigned his responsible position of Vice-Chancellor in 1930 as a protest against the policy of repression pursued by the British Government at the time. His speeches during this period signified a bold and free approach to the political thinking, besides being a moral support to the nationalists of the day. His clear thinking and analysis of the historical events gave him a true perspective of the situation. In 1937 when the Congress Ministry was formed under the new Constitution that came into force on the passing of the Government of India Act 1935, Dr. Reddy was nominated to the Upper House of the Legislative Council. Somehow soon he fell out, as he did not see eye to eye with the Congress Party although in many ways he was one with the Congress.

He was a great admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and he has paid huge tributes to the Congress and Mahatmaji. But in certain points he disagreed with them. He said once, "Mahatma Gandhi tries to inculcate a new moral and evolve a new type of society, based on the two cardinal doctrines of Non-violence and Truth. A deduction from non-violence we have the following policies, abolition of the police, abolition of the military and a state with no coercive power. The state must be a school not barracks; and a school without a cane. From what he regards as truth contrived with non-violence, we have an educational system, which is to be self-supporting and which will inculcate the virtues of self-contained life, the introduction to the self-contained village and to non-competitive, non-aggressive national economy. But in the field of politics uncontaminated doctrine is impossible. And we have accordingly compromises. The author of Non-violence supports the employment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. His followers are for the Indianisation of the Army and for universal Military Training ... I mention these things merely as subjects for serious reflection .. Nor would I advise you to decry a doctrine simply because it cannot be immediately adopted wholesale and unalloyed. A practical test is - it leads to such betterment as would compensate for the sacrifice of its purity? ... But then has any philosophical doctrine, any religion or philosophy ever received perfection?"

His supremely independent thinking and powers of originality made him a citizen of the world in the wider sense of the term, rather than an insular party man. His views made him an educationist rather than a politician. Although he practically retired from politics since his resignation of his membership from the Congress he critically examined national, political and international situation and contributed invaluable suggestions now and then to the National Government. When most of us often in a fit of nationalism deplore the effects of English education, Dr. Reddy has been marked with certain effects of English Education which are laudable and therefore enviable. His promptness in replying a letter or even a post card of good wishes or his quick obligations, when approached for a favour, or his punctuality in keeping an appointment or attending a lecture are indeed praise-worthy. The meticulous care with which he dealt with small as well as big problems is extraordinary. This signifies certainly an important feature marking the efficiency of a career. Promptness in action, organising ability, prim and proper orderliness, punctuality of time, preferring efficiency to sentiment are certainly some traits of character which are alien to us. Instead of admiring and learning them we associate them sometimes with the foreigners and feel supremely self-complacent about not having them. We are a peculiar lot indeed.

LOSS TO EDUCATION ;

The Indian Educational world mourns deeply the passing away of Dr. C. R. Reddy, the noted scholar and well-known Vice-Chancellor. In his sad and sudden demise our country in general and South India in particular has lost one of the most charming personalities of modern times who had been lavishly endowed by Nature with rare gifts of intellectual brilliance of subtle judgement, rapturous oratory and skilful debating

Dr. Reddy looms large on the horizon of gifted scholars as an outstanding figure who had contributed a good deal both

to English and Telugu Literature. Quantitatively his writings are not much but qualitatively are invaluable. They are not of the hour; but they are for all time. Many an original and masterly article on interesting subjects and many an educational report stand to his credit. His brilliant "Prefaces" in Telugu is an outstanding piece of contribution to Telugu thought. It popularised satire which was regarded till recently as an alien element in Telugu literature. His "Kavitvatatvavicharamu" an enquiry into the principles of poetry is a unique piece of art and his brochure on political economy in the same language has been acclaimed as a thought-provoking and stimulating essay. His booklet entitled "Congress in Office" is a scintillating piece of writing. His "Navayamini" is another original work in Telugu. Although one does not in toto agree with his arguments in it, one cannot deny the fact that it is a thought provoking volume. Added to his original and most refreshing ideas, gentle humour has rendered his writings and talks extraordinarily fascinating.

In recognition of his scholarship the Andhra University has conferred the title "Kalaprapurna" on him in 1937. Much earlier the British Government honoured him with a knighthood. His friendly manner and brilliant conversational ability distinguished him as an eminent personality.

Just an year ago he went back to Mysore University, his first love, as the Pro-Chancellor, shortly after he had submitted a report on the reform of University Education in the State.

Dr. Reddy was abundant in vitality, and untold charisma. We should be happy indeed to see the like of him again.

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Kody Rammooorthy

(1880 – 1938)

It rarely falls to the lot of men to become legends in their own life time and of the few who have had this rare distinction, Rammooorthy is one.

Known as “Kaliyuga Bhima” he blazed a trail with his glorious feats of strength that seemed too marvellous to be credible. Indeed he created a mystique with his prodigious strength that had not dimmed with the passage of years.

Rammooorthy hails from a well known Kapu family of Vishakhapatnam. He was born in the year 1880 in a village called Veeraghata; strangely enough the name itself indicates strength and one with strength was born here. His father was a loyal Government official who desired that his son too might be well educated and ultimately get into Government services, a desire shared by many people at the time for its various benefits, mostly the security that it offered.

However as it often happens all children do not fulfill the desires and ambitions of their parents. Rammooorthy was no exception to this, He somehow did not very much appreciate studies. He was playful and concentrated all his attention even while very young on games and sports.

This interest developed by leaps and bounds for the little boy's imagination grew with the remarkable and miraculous stories that he had heard about Dwarabandhala Chandrayya Naidu, a nationalist. He was supporting the Koya Community, and was encouraging them to rebel against the foreign

government. When the police was after him he went underground. Many interesting stories were told of the miraculous escape of the rebel and the British Government's announcement of a princely reward worth thousands of rupees for the one who gets him. Rammoorthy's father was appointed to find out the whereabouts of this man.

Young Rammoorthy was deeply interested in this rebel's story and it must be said that many untoward incidents and interesting stories were being told of him which fired the imagination of the boy; and he wanted to do some thing which would equally be miraculous.

His father like any other father wanted his son to concentrate on his studies, but then all that Rammoorthy could do in obedience to his father's wishes was only to do his High School ! Even this with great difficulty for it was told that once when his father could not bear to see the poor performance of his son at the school, he gave him a sound beating, that the boy out of disgust left the house and retired to a neighbouring forest. Later after a week or so the boy was seen in the streets with a tiger walking with him, as if it was his pet dog !

However he was brought back home and sent again to school. After his schooling he was appointed a drill master in his own school which Rammoorthy thought was wonderful. At that time the Government Education Department had made Physical Education in every school and college compulsory. The Department had opened a special college to train teachers in Physical Education at Saidapet, Madras.

Rammoorthy joined this College in 1901 with great interest and put in first class work.

He stood first almost in every branch of the study. In boxing, in wrestling and in other such fields he was recognised as an extraordinary student.

Having won laurels, he had decided to be independent; therefore he never joined any institution.

It was at this time, when he was twenty years old he had not only become a leading wrestler and boxer but a heavy weight lifter - the last of the feats he had developed amazingly after practising a long period, the control of breath.

At 21 he was able to keep a weight of one and a half tons on his chest easily and in course of time he was able to bear the weight of even 3 tons. He could also keep an elephant on his chest for 5 long minutes!

To display these feats and many others, Rammoorthy had organised a Circus wherein he had given many an opportunity to various individuals who had shown their extraordinary brawn and brain in gymnastics. The fame of his Circus spread far and wide, not only in our country but also abroad.

Lord Minto, the Governor General of India, went to the Circus grounds to meet Rammoorthy personally. Rammoorthy who was at his prayers at the time was reciting "Veeranjaneya Dandakam" could not be disturbed. So the Viceroy had to wait for about ten minutes and then had the pleasure of meeting the Indian Hercules; what was more, Lord Minto who wanted to personally examine his strength desired that Rammoorthy should stop his automobile which he started to drive in full speed. Rammoorthy tied the car with a rope at the back and held it with all his strength and thus stopped the running car. This was no mean a demonstration. This incident brought Rammoorthy immense publicity, that there followed without exaggeration any number of grand programmes.

Those were the days of national struggle for Independence and political leaders like Bala Gangadhar Tilak invited him to their States and arranged for the display of his feats. His acquaintance with Tilak developed into a life-long friendship and it was Tilak who encouraged him to go abroad and show to the West his extraordinary physical prowess and strength.

The four day stay at Allahabad when the Indian National Congress had met at its Annual Conference gave Rammoorthy

the opportunity of showing all his feats to the members who had come from various parts of the country. Rammoorthy had decided to go abroad at the instance of Tilak. His travel abroad must have been a sight by itself for, his entourage of one thousand and six hundred people must have been a staggering spectacle to the West. His tour was extensive for he went round the world.

The first show was in London where thousands went to see and one need hardly mention that the audience was more than stunned at the extraordinary feats he had performed. He had two automobiles on his chest and broke a strong brass chain into bits.

Their majesties King George and Queen Mary were among the audience and they were so glad to have seen the programme after which Rammoorthy was honoured by an invitation to Buckingham Palace for dinner and he was given the title of "Indian Hercules." He was the first Indian then to have been honoured by their Majesties.

The visit to Paris was equally astounding. He was received by thousands of Parisians who spent enormous amounts of money in honouring him.

Spain must have been a unique experience to Rammoorthy. The National Sport of this country itself is extraordinary. The bull fight with the matador is seen by thousands and one has heard of many a matador having been killed by the bull. Rammoorthy who had neither heard nor seen such a sport, leave alone practising fighting with a bull, was asked to participate in it. He accepted the challenge to the surprise of the Spanish people. When he entered the arena before thousands he saw for the first time the well-fed animal with sharp horns making one leap at him. He, on the spur of the moment in a split second, as it were, caught hold of the animal's horns with a firm grip and rubbed its face to the ground that the poor animal felt helpless and breathless and fell on its back. Rammoorthy, who

took a strange knife with him, sent it through its chest and killed the animal unceremoniously. This was not anticipated by the Spanish. A great ovation along with a hero's welcome was offered to him.

His visit to Japan, China and Burma were equally hospitable and throngs of people came to his shows and he was admired by all.

In spite of all this, one of his biographers had mentioned an unhappy incident that had taken place in Rangoon. Some out of jealousy wanted to see the end of him: so he was invited to a private dinner where Rammooorthy luckily smelt a rat and thought that they were after his life; so without losing time he went to the balcony and saw that luckily his own car was parked right under it. He jumped into it and sped away. This somehow unnerved him and spoilt his plans for further travel. He was to visit the United States of America and other countries in Europe that had invited him but he cancelled his trip and returned home instead.

As a man, he was given to a good deal of charity. It is said that he earned more than a couple of crores of rupees and he gave away most of his wealth to charities—particularly helped many a poor family and more so poor students.

His desire to see Indians grow into a nation of strong stalwarts, made him establish many a Physical Education Centre in Andhra Pradesh. Tilak, who was greatly impressed by Rammooorthy's strength and his disciplined life, was responsible in establishing a number of Shivaji and Hanuman Vyayam Shalas in Maharashtra.

Andhra Pradesh is certainly proud of this hero whose name became a household word and there was not a day during his life when the newspapers did not carry some news item or the other of him. People in their exuberance presented him with invaluable addresses—composed loving poems about him, wrote

newsy articles on him. They were full of praise and in their admiration conferred many titles on him such as Victorious Veera Hanuman, the Wrestling Hero, the Boxing Champion and so on.

We have heard of one with such extraordinary strength only in our Epic story, Mahabharata, whereas in actual life in the 20th Century Andhra Pradesh has had the opportunity of having one of her sons endowed with such tremendous strength with which he earned plenty; and what was more he distributed his wealth among the poor and worthy happily.

He passed away on January 16th in 1938 leaving his name ever green in the memory of his beloved people of Andhra Pradesh.

“Andhra Pitamaha” Madapaty Hanumantha Rao

(1885 – 1970)

Madapaty Hanumantha Rao was popularly known as “Andhra Pitamaha” for all his pioneer literary and social reform movements in Hyderabad where a dying bureaucracy had put up numberless unthinkable restrictions on individual freedom and liberty. Despite these despicable obstacles, Hanumantha Rao not only managed to get his movements started but made them progress and ultimately achieve what he wanted to achieve namely road to self-Government.

The Telugu Library of Hanumakonda and later the Shri Krishnadevaraya Library at Hyderabad were literally his creations. Through these institutions he was not only able to widen his activities but founded other institutions as well, with the help of which he was able to rouse the people of Telangana from their deep slumber to their individual rights and privileges towards self-Government.

His tireless work and his innate love for his people had won him the genuine affection of the Telugu people not only in Telangana but in the whole of Andhra Pradesh. In short he was the idol of millions of Andhras.

The great wonder of it was as his biographer Shri Adiraju Veerabhadra Rao says, he was neither a famous poet like either of the Tirupati Venkata Kavulu, nor a distinguished scholar like Vedam Venkataraya Shastri, nor a political thinker like Dr.

Pattabhi Satharamayya, nor a renowned philosopher like Dr. Radhakrishnan, nor a great historian like Kommaraju Lakshmana Rao, nor a highly placed officer like Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy, nor an affluent person like Kashinathuni Nageshwar Rao and yet he was similar to all these great men in acquiring greatness and as a leader who roused the people of Telangana to their rights and privileges.

Madapaty Hanumantha Rao was born on 22nd January 1885 in a middle class Brahmin family in the village Pokkumuri in Nandigama Taluk in Krishna District. His father Venkatapiah and mother Venkata Subbanma were living happily with him and his younger brother Tirumala Rao. But soon their loving family got broken up because of the sad and sudden demise of his father. The forlorn wife, with her two sons, became literally helpless as there was no one to support them. However one of the maternal uncles of the boys, Venkata Rao who was at the time working as a Peshkar in Tansildar's Office at Suryapet took them to his house and brought the boys up with great care and affection.

It was here that Madapaty had his schooling and was moving with his uncle to the various places where the latter was transferred. As there were no good schools in some of the places of transfer, Venkat Rao sent the boys to his younger brother Ramachandra Rao who was also a Peshkar at Nalgonda.

In 1898 Madapaty passed his Middle school in Urdu and in a couple of years, he worked at his English and appeared for the English Middle School Examination in which again he was successful. After this he migrated to Warangal where he sat for the Madras Matriculation Examination in which he was successful. With this came in a way the end of his schooling.

In the meanwhile his two loving uncles who brought him up and a cousin of his who was of great help to him all passed away. All this had happened before Madapaty was eighteen years old.

He was by now well acquainted with English, Telugu, Persian and Urdu languages due to his self study. Having had no opportunity to prosecute his studies, he had no other alternative but to take up a job to support himself and his family. So he took up a clerk's post in the Education Department and settled down to life in Hanamkonda.

After eight years he migrated to Hyderabad where again he took an employment in the Education Department on a salary of Rs. 50/- which fortunately did not last long.

Madapaty entered a contest for a more interesting position in the Nizam's Legislative Office where a candidate highly proficient in English, Urdu and Religion was required. Madapaty was selected as the best and the salary was Rs 100/ per month. His superiors liked him for his meticulous work. His efficiency and sincerity won him all the praises from his superiors.

Madapaty was very keen on going to Hyderabad not because of any position but because of the various opportunities he could have to expand his knowledge. He was indeed happy that it had worked out according to his plans. In fact earlier than this period when he was in Hanamkonda, in one summer, he joined the law classes and he was very anxious to complete them.

Now with these untold opportunities, he began to appear for various departmental examinations. Many great leaders those days were all lawyers who were able to live independent lives and do a good deal of public work. So he too as a young man was drawn to the Law Profession. He joined therefore law classes and during the five year period he was in Hyderabad, he was able to pass in succession Suvvamdarya, Duvvamdarya, Avvaldarya and he was now a qualified lawyer who could practise his profession. More than that he could also have the freedom of language and action which he longed for, so that he could use these instruments for the welfare of his people who were at the time, needless to mention, down-trodden and spiritless.

He began his practice as a junior lawyer under an able north Indian named Rai Vishveswaranath who had settled down in Hyderabad as a lawyer. Later as an independent lawyer he was not only able to build up a modest practice but set up good standards between the clients and a lawyer. It was not merely a question of making money but established good relations between his clients and himself and was able to rouse political feelings in them towards the cause of freedom. So his clients in one way were his admirers and followers who looked upon him as a leader besides being a successful lawyer.

Madapaty, besides being a lawyer, was a born social worker. He wanted every one to be educated. He knew his down-trodden people were not aware of their rights. He would feel more depressed than his client if he had lost his case. Such was his sensitive nature. He was selective in his cases. It was the innocent and the exploited one that he wanted to help. He was unlike other lawyers who took up all cases for the sake of money.

It was during this period, there were three important movements that were in full swing. The first was for the promotion of Telugu language and literature, the second for social reform, the third for political freedom. In all these movements Madapaty was deeply involved. In 1901 when Srikrishnadevaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayamu was founded, it may be said that it was the beginning of the Language Movement. Madapaty took deep interest in the development of the Telugu language that he not only ordered many books, periodicals, and other kinds of literature from various places, but encouraged Telugu people to read them and improve their language. This has encouraged many a talented poet to write about the establishment of Sri Krishnadevaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam.

As for the Social Reform Movement, Kandukuri Veeresalingam has been the forerunner in Andhra Pradesh. His endeavour for reforms and his vigorous articles inspired Madapaty

who started a similar movement in Telangana, where many had joined and helped the cause.

The other important movement was the political one which began strictly speaking in Bengal, when Lord Curzon vivisected Bengal into two. This enraged the Bengalis and brought about the Vandemataram Movement, for they staunchly opposed the division and started a severe political movement which shortly spread into other parts of India particularly in Andhra Pradesh where the lectures of Bepin Chandrapal had inspired you when the latter toured Andhra Pradesh. Madapaty took great interest in this and participated in its various aspects.

He was involved in all these even as a student at Hanamkonda. But despite his endeavour to make people know about these, he could not venture to hold meetings for the Nizam Government would not tolerate this. However Madapaty's bright idea was to turn his attention to education of his people who were highly ignorant when compared with those in British India. As a matter of fact there was only one High School for all the eight districts in Nizam's dominions. No one seems to have taken any notice of this, for they were unaware of the situation. There were rich zamindars, rich Deshmukhs but no one to rectify this condition. Even the language of Telugu was not spoken correctly, for it was full of Urdu words. Madapaty was greatly worried as to the future of his people. They had neither education nor status in the State. They seemed to have been a great burden on the State-

Madapaty established smaller institutions like Bala Saraswathi Andhra Bhasha Nilayam, Vemana Andhra Basha Nilayam, so that many people irrespective of caste and creed could benefit from these. He was not only speaking to people through his lectures but was constantly appealing in his papers "Nilagiri Patrika" and "Golkonda Patrika". There was the monthly "Sujata" which was popularising the cause through its various articles. His tireless work in this direction attracted not only the leaders of the place, but every one in Telangana.

Madapaty had the rare genius of getting those who could be of absolute help in doing the needed propaganda to benefit others.

In course of time he established, with the help of his friends, Andhra Jana Sangham which later became the Andhra Maha Sabha. He had started taking deep interest in the program of this institution. Branches of this institution were established in different places in Secunderabad, Nalgonda, Khammam, Parkala and Warangal. Within a short period of four years as many as 50 branches were started and about 90 independent branches also had begun to function. This net-work of educational institutions could not have gone without spreading their message to the people. Now there was a need for a Centre for all these branches. So in 1923 they established what was known as Nizam Rashtra Andhra Jana Kendra Sangham.

The first conference of this association met in 1923 in Hyderabad. Hanumantha Rao was elected its Secretary. Almost every year the Central Sangham was meeting at its Conference at different districts and at the very second Conference, they started another allied Conference, for the Library. These Library Conferences were also being regularly arranged at various districts, where the Central Social Conferences met. In course of time they paved way for many kinds of Conferences. Some of them were even communal, but Hanumantha Rao did not mind them, for that would give opportunities for various communities to get more and more educated and cultured. These groups in and through these valuable get-togethers met people and exchanged their views and learnt a good deal not to speak of cultivating friendships,

In course of time Madapaty contemplated bringing all these groups and small conferences into a big one in the name of Andhra Mahasabha. The Andhra Jana Sanghams that were being established are now made to reach the villages, so that everyone, the lowly and down-trodden also, could get their message. There were to later develop into a large one united Sabha

in Andhra Maha Sabha. Unnava Venkatanarayana was appointed the Secretary to do the propaganda. He started collecting money for the organisation and in 1930 the first Andhra Maha Sabha met at Jogipet in Medak district and later successively it began to meet at various districts. Side by side the Communists started similar conferences with a different message of course. This had hurt Hanumantha Rao but then he, with his abundant patience, although deeply hurt at the ideological division of the people, yet was trying his best to bring all the people together.

The 4th Nizam Andhra Maha Sabha that met at Sircilla was an important one in that Madapaty himself was elected to be the President. He was honoured greatly. In this connection the chairman of the reception committee and other well known leaders like Madiraju Rama Koteswar Rao, Burgula Ramakrishna Rao spoke on the occasion. Hanumantha Rao was not satisfied with this success, for he organised separate women's conferences, Andhra Mahila Sabha every year along with that of the Andhra Maha Sabha. Invitations were sent to friends outside the State too.

Under the auspices of the Andhra Movement a number of literary activities were started like the oratorical contests, Women's Special Education Research Section and so on. In course of time the latter became an independent organisation under the name of Shri Lakshminarayana Research Section. It needs no mention how much of help Madapaty gave to this organisation. In this connection it must be said a good deal of work was done in regard to the Harijan Welfare.

Many publications came into effect and these were sold for a nominal price of one anna and half an anna, so that the knowledge in it could reach every person.

It must be said here that even people who were outside Andhra began to recognise Madapaty's work.

In 1945 a special function was arranged to honour Madapaty.

The law then existing in Nizam's Dominion was that education must be imparted only in Urdu. Madapaty felt that children's education taught in any other language but the mother tongue was not helpful. So they opened a school for girls called Paropakarini Balika Pathasala. For this Madapaty worked greatly. This was a difficult time, for the Government would not recognise such schools. So it became a big problem for the leaders like Ramachandra Naik, Barrister, Rai Visveswarnath, Srimati Ahalyabai Mallamma. Sri Krishnaswamy Mudiraju, Hanumantha Rao who formed themselves into a society to expand girls education. Finding that Residency Bazar, now Sultan Bazar, being a free zone under the British, they opened a school where Marathi and Telugu were introduced as media, though Marathi was later dropped as there was not adequate demand. Telugu was continued for three years and later for want of finances it was given up. However Madapaty, with the help of Vaddakonda Narasimha Rao, took it on their responsibility, converted the school into a High School. Now it has become a Telugu Medium School, from where hundreds of students have been sent out. In spite of many letters to Osmania and Nagpur and Andhra High School Boards, they were not able to get recognition to continue the School. However the Smt. Nathibai Damodar Thackersay Women's University recognised it and said that the students could answer in Telugu. In 1932 this School was recognised till M.A. Later in 1945 Andhra recognised this School and allowed the students to appear for Andhra Matriculation. Later Feminine subjects like Needle work, Home craft, Music and first aid were introduced. With the help of Rajah Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy this institution had become a very important one. Even this progress seemed very slow and Madapaty could not, despite his impetuosity, do much as the Government had stood against these activities although harmless, for they suspected them of political orientation. Madapaty asked the Government to send a list of such institutions that the Government considered political, so that they could organise such activities that are not political. Yet no reply ever came from the Government.

At last the Government recognised Andhra Maha Sabha. This victory was entirely due to the tireless work of Madapaty. The success was extraordinary, for any meeting other than that of the Government, they should deposit a sum of Rs. 2000 which the Government might not return, if they thought it was linked with some political activities.

Madapaty had to face another unique difficulty. Even if Andhras, in British Indian States, did not participate in his endeavours, their silence would have been better, but some of them unfortunately said that their activities were political, thus rousing the suspicion of the Nizam Government; for instance Palakondeti Venkatarama Sarma wrote a couple of articles in "Nilagiri" that Andhra Jan Sanghams were political and this was vehemently contradicted by Madapaty. This controversy naturally made the Government once again very suspicious of the Andhras and their activities. Although in the beginning Madapaty tried his best to retain the educational activities of the Andhra Maha Sabha, later they became highly political.

Madapaty tried his level best to start a newspaper called Hyderabad Patrika. No permission was given. Then he was considered a dangerous person to the Government. Later permission was given to Sri Bukkapattanam Ramanujachari who sought the help of Madapaty and started a newspaper. In course of time permission was given to some others. Thus "Nilagiri Patrika," "Golkonda Patrika," "Sujata," "Desabandhu," "Telugu Patrika" were not only started but were running well with Madapaty's blessings. All these papers discussed mostly the Nizam Government and their attitude to the people.

Madapaty could speak well in English, Telugu and Urdu on any subject like language, religion, social reform, politics etc.

He was a good writer too. He started writing even as a student in Hanamkoda. He was then interested in poetry too.

He was devoted to poetry but later he thought writing in prose was the need of the time. So he devoted all his time to the various causes for which he was agitating

As an author, his first attempt was his Telugu translation of Anandamath of Bankim Chandra Chatterji, but unfortunately it was not printed as the translation of one Doraiswami Ayyar had come in already; so he did not get his book printed. He wrote about the Italian devoted citizen Garibaldi's biography, but it could not be printed again for the publishers in Masulipatnam who undertook to do it could not fulfil it owing to certain unforeseen circumstances. In the meanwhile Kolavennu Ramakoteswar Rao's life story of Garibaldi had appeared, so he thought his book would be redundant. The third attempt was a Roman History which also did not see the light of the day. His first book which was at last printed was the literal translation of Epic India by Chintaman Rao Vaidya. "Kshetra Kalapu Hridayalu" was published in 1927.

His short stories were original. He was almost the first one to have written short stories in 1910 which he published in "Krishna Patrika". Some stories out of them were published as "Mallika Guchchamu". In 1911 "Vidhipreranamamu" was published. Some stories out of these were translations of Premchand's stories in Hindi. Some are his own. His stories were praised by Vavilla Ramaswamy Sastrulu.

Another book of his was "Political Reform in Nizam's Dominions". It was a report of a Body appointed by Praja Parishad. It was a translation from English into Telugu. Nizam's Government appointed a Committee called Ayyangar Committee to write a political plan and Madapaty was chosen to represent the people. Many well-known educated people were members; yet Madapaty was chosen as the President. It was indeed a great honour.

His 60th year was celebrated grandly for two days in 1946 in the Reddy Hostel. Raja Bahadur was the Chairman of the

Reception Committee. Hanumantha Rao, his wife and son were taken in a procession in a carriage carried by white horses with music and band. In the streets merchants and friends garlanded him.

Aravamuda Iyyengar inaugurated the function and Raja Bahadur introduced the Chief Guest and Suravaram read the Sanmana Patram. Maharashtra and Kannada leaders also honoured him and made speeches. He was weighed in rupees which amounted to Rs. 6450. The whole amount was given to him.

The next day Pingali Venkatarama Reddy took the chair. The former and Madapaty were friends since they were young. A souvenir of 393 pages was prepared. At 27 places 32 meetings were held and 117 associations participated in this function! Many poets like Oddiraju Ranga Rao, Adavi Bapji Raju, Kaloji Narayana Rao composed beautiful poems bringing out his contributions to Telangana.

They had collected altogether Rs. 8400 which was formed into a Trust with Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy as the chairman and Madapaty as the Treasurer. Andhra Chandrika Grandhamala was instituted under whose auspices were published many books including the two volumes of Telangana Andhrodyamamu.

In 1952 the Municipality was established and it was a problem as to who should be its Chairman. Madapaty was appointed as the first Mayor in 1952 which office he held till 1955. for he was unanimously elected thrice.

In 1952 when for the first time elections were conducted to establish the Hyderabad Assembly, he was given Gadwal Constituency which was Communist oriented, so he was defeated. Later when the Legislative Council was set up, he was returned as a member of the Legislative Council.

He was honoured in 1955 by all sections of the House. Padma Bhushan was conferred on him. Among the Telengana

Andhra Ratna Duggirala Gopala Krishnayya

(1889 – 1928)

It is sad irony that some of our very great men, revolutionaries in thought and action like Adi Sankaracharya and Swami Vivekananda have been snatched away from us in their prime of life. Sankara passed away when he was thirty two years old and Vivekananda in his thirty ninth year. Had they lived longer, one need hardly mention, India would have certainly benefited a great deal.

Similarly this young revolutionary Duggirala Gopala Krishnayya would have achieved as none had so far in making India one of the most modern countries in the world, if only Nature had spared him. Modern not so much in the political sense of the term, though Gopala Krishnayya laboured hard in the political field too, but in the sociological sense.

He wanted India to be united and strong in order to achieve political freedom. He wanted to strike at the very root of our one great problem the caste system, which has been eating into the very vitals of our being: His great endeavour to reform Hindu Society had been unique and extraordinary. He said in one of his addresses at Masulipatam that he was planning to induce the Gayatri Mantram to every one in the villages and convert all of them into Brahmins. He was going to set up in every village a group and every one who joins this group would be considered a Brahmin. This group would have to set up in its turn, an educational institution, a hospital and must add to these, three separate wings - a library, a Co-operative Society and a Panchayat. In and through these institutions, the group would have

people, he was the first one to have had this honour. He could not go to Delhi, so the following year Dr. Rajendra Prasad, when he came to Hyderabad, personally honoured him.

He was made a permanent member of the Osmania University Senate. He was for four years a member of the University Syndicate. He tried to give prominence to Telugu at Osmania. He succeeded in making it as the second Language at Osmania. In view of these services rendered to the University, Osmania University conferred honoris causa degree of Doctor of Literature on him.

In 1958 he became the Chairman of the Legislative Council which office he continued till 1964. He was appreciated by every one including the opposition. Such was the respect given to him.

Andhra Ratna

Duggirala Gopala Krishnayya

(1889 - 1928)

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the power and authority to rule the village. If every village had this set up, he said, it would most certainly strengthen the village and make it not only self-sufficient but bring about unity and a kind of solidarity in virtue of which swaraj would easily be attained.

Gopala Krishnayya was born in an ordinary middle class Brahmin family in a village called Penuganchiprolu in Nandigama Taluk, Krishna District. His mother passed away after three days of his birth. So his grand mother and uncle Sivaramayya took charge of the infant and brought him up with care and affection.

He had his schooling in Guntur where he passed his Matriculation after which he took up a small job in Bapatla and began to work there. He got married when he was only 19 years old and it all seemed that he got settled in life. But all of a sudden, an untold desire seemed to have sprouted within him to prosecute his studies, so he suddenly made up his mind to go abroad for further studies. From 1911 to 1916 he was in the United Kingdom, studying at the University of Edinburgh, where he took his Master's Degree. It was here, as a student, he became an ardent disciple of Dr. Ananda Kumaraswami from whom he learnt the significance of Drama, Dance, Music and Poetry, in short, all Fine Arts and their significance in life which were to stand him in good stead in his later life.

After he returned from England in 1917 he became a lecturer in the Government Training College at Rajahmundry which post he held just for an year. Later he joined the National College, Masulipatam, where again he did not feel like continuing for he found no academic freedom there. He worked just for an year and resigned. Somehow his temperament and love of absolute freedom did not permit him to work in these colleges.

As a freeman in 1919, near Chirala he founded what was known as Vidya Peetha Goshti - an educational centre, where he wanted to freely and happily put into effect many of his pet and

revolutionary ideas and thus give a jolt to the existing educational system and have a new one in its place.

But then those were the days of Gandhiji's Non-Co-operation against the British Government. Everyone was heartily plunging himself into the Movement; and Gopala Krishnayya himself has been drawn to it and he threw himself body and soul into the activity. He had worked extremely hard to do all he could to make the Programme a success.

He had an original plan of organising an army of people into well trained and disciplined volunteers. It is they who impressed Mahatma Gandhi when the Congress session was held at Bezwada. This army of volunteers served the members of the Congress so well particularly when the national leaders like Gandhiji, Nehruji, Ali Brothers and others were taken round the city in procession. Gopala Krishnayya's volunteers showed such tremendous discipline that every one took note of it and Gandhiji in particular was so pleased to see this Organisation that he was naturally impressed with the Founder - our Gopala Krishnayya.

When the All India Congress meetings were over at Vijayawada, Gandhiji took a tour of Andhra and when he went to Chirala he was given one of the most enthusiastic and unforgettable receptions with a welcome address on palm leaf and a purse of Rs. 4000/- from this small village. It was at that time that the people of Chirala were completely upset over the new Municipal taxes, levied on them.

The Government had decided to bring Chirala and Perala, the twin villages, to have one Municipality. This meant more taxes which the citizens naturally did not want to pay; so there was a great agitation against the establishment of Municipality. Gopala Krishnayya, seeing the difficulty of the people, sent an appeal to the Government urging for status quo, but the Government did not care to revise their plan.

Luminaries of Andhra Pradesh

When Gandhiji was asked for advice he gave them two alternatives; either they should reject to pay taxes or leave the village. He also said that they should take the counsel of Gopala Krishnayya. People knew what was in store for them. The few people who did not pay the taxes were severely punished by imprisonment.

Now the people of Chirala and Perala have decided to observe the second alternative of leaving the twin villages—a brave gesture indeed! They put up tents and thatched little huts and very ostentatiously with grand music and gas lights started in procession to the out-skirts of the village to live. It was a spectacular sight indeed to see, for every one including the rich who have their own good dwellings and women who had never stirred out of their homes joining this procession. One could imagine the hard-ships of people in this movement. Not only had they left behind their all without fear of their property being robbed, but had chosen a life of sacrifice to fight the taxes. So the twin villages became practically empty and it must be said in praise of the citizens that at the cost of every comfort, they marched on and people could not help but admire their spirit of sacrifice. National leaders like Sri Prakasam and Sreenivasa Iyengar paid a visit to them and gave them some financial help to carry on the struggle. Gopala Krishnayya himself had been collecting money to support this exodus. Neither the Government nor the Municipality took any notice of this exodus and people happily declined to pay the taxes.

It was in summer that they migrated and now the monsoons had broken and their temporary tenements were no good in protecting them. But they were not broken in their spirits.

In the meanwhile there was the Andhra Maha Sabha meeting at Berhampore which Gopala Krishnayya attended and spoke vehemently on the burning question whether to obey the Government's curfew orders or not to obey. The country was pell mell with the Non-Cooperation Movement. Many were

going in and out of jails. For the seditious speech that he made, Gopala Krishnavya was locked up. He had to leave his charge—the people of Chirala and Peralakota. After an year's incarceration Gopala Krishnayya was released in 1922 and no less than Shri Rajagopalachari and others went to receive him.

It is strange that after his return from the jail Gopala Krishnavya's attitude towards life underwent a complete change. His attention now is directed towards Hindu society and its immediate reforms.

To popularise his reformist ideas he travelled incessantly through the length and breadth of Andhra Pradesh giving lectures on the reforms that he set his heart to bring about.

These lectures were delivered at monster gatherings for people in throngs from all parts of the town would attend. Gopala Krishnayya was not merely an original thinker but was a scholar and an orator. Above all he was a Rama Bhakia — a follower of Lord Rama. His articulate addresses were enjoyed by one and all. As a matter of fact people would walk miles to hear him and he charged every organisation that invited him a fee of Rs. 1'6 for his lecture and the proceeds went to the Congress party of which he was an ardent member.

While working sincerely for these reforms, he was an active member of the Congress. He, with his wife Durga Bhavanamma, was regularly attending the various sessions of the Congress held annually at different places. He attended the Congress session at Gaya and participated in all its proceedings. He was at the session at Nagpur, where he was elected the General Secretary of the All India Congress. This was not only a great personal honour to Gopala Krishnayya but to Andhra Pradesh itself for he was the first Andhra to hold that important office.

This office had given him a national status for he had the opportunity of travelling throughout the country where he was

popularising both the philosophy of Congress as well as the greatness of Andhra. His work as the General Secretary had been applauded by one and all and at the next session at Kakinada he was about to be elected for a second term, but unexpectedly he was not returned by the State Congress Committee, even as an ordinary member, so he lost his chance of being re-elected as a General Secretary. This was unfortunate for rumours were rife that petty jealousies gave way to this unhappy result. Many, instead of rejoicing over the ability and enthusiasm of one amongst them felt jealous and worked against him.

The Congress, at this session, was internally split into two camps, one of Chittaranjan Das and the other of Gandhiji. Gopala Krishnayya followed the footsteps of Gandhiji for he was opposed to entering the Legislative Councils.

However it cannot be gainsaid that although Gopala Krishnayya had lost the high office, he had not lost the high place he had earned in the recent political history of our country.

Now ever since he came out of the jail he was ailing from consumption and in 1928, at the prime of his life, he passed away, plunging not only Andhra Pradesh but the whole country into deep sorrow. Gopala Krishnayya was uniquely endowed with such brilliance and a genuine feeling for the country. His scholarship and fore-sight gave him revolutionary ideas to galvanise our country into a modern place. But Nature had ordained it otherwise.

Years rolled by and it might have been surmised that people had forgotten Gopala Krishnayya, but it is not true. "Better late than never". Thirty four years after the demise of the great one, in 1962 the people of Chirala put up a bronze life size statue for the "Andra Ratna" a title that was conferred on Gopala Krishnayya by his devoted and loving people.

Suravaram Pratapa Reddy

(1896 - 1953)

Suravaram Pratapa Reddy was a multi - faceted personality to whom goes the credit of having roused the feelings of the people of Telangana towards social, political and literary pursuits. He was a powerful orator, a fearless journalist, a tireless writer, a genuine scholar given to research, an undaunted critic, an inborn patriot and above all a man of untold selflessness and sacrifices. It is said that there was literally no movement in Telangana that had not been blessed by him.

Pratapa Reddy hails from a rich family that lived in a village called Itikalapadu in Alampur Taluk, Mahboobnagar District. He was born on May 28 1896. His father was Narayana Reddy and mother was Rangamma. Unfortunately when he was about 16 years old, his father passed away and his paternal uncle Rama Krishna Reddy took charge of the boy and brought him up with love and affection.

In the beginning he was sent to a vernacular school where it was found that he was not making any progress. So he was sent to another school where he was taught along with Telugu, English too. In 1906 he joined Coles Memorial School in the first form. Here he took Telugu as the second language and studied Sanskrit also. Till his Matriculation he took Sanskrit as one of his subjects and in 1912 he appeared for his Matriculation and was not successful as he was not well up in Mathematics. He had never liked Arithmetic as he says in his "Swavishaya Samgraham". In 1913 he reappeared for the examination and was successful with good marks in some of his subjects. His headmaster wrote in his School Final Register the following about him. "Honest, straight forward, intelligent but not industrious".

He may not have been industrious but his one ambition was to become a famous and immortal Telugu poet otherwise he thought his life was not worth living. But he could not concentrate on Telugu alone for his people at home and folks at school were not going to let him do that; so he was marking his time when he would be independent, so that he could devote more time for his Telugu, and yet he was able to finish reading all the novels of Ch. I. Lakshminarayanan that were quite popular at the time. He also had begun Veeresalingam's "Kavita Charitra" (History of poets) Venkata Kavi's "Sarangadhara Kavyam". He was not just reading these, but committing them almost to memory. He would then write to the various authors and get their other publications and study them with the help of a dictionary. He learnt Telugu prosody and grammar on his own. His self study of Telugu at the time was indeed remarkable. His ambition made him write a translation of Boothby's "In Freedom's Struggle" an English novel but it never saw the light of the day, for the manuscript found its way to a sweetmeat shop that gave him a "laddu" in return!

He was like Rabindranath Tagore who did not like studies in an institution. However, his uncle Krishna Reddy felt differently. So he was admitted into Nizam College where he passed his F.A. Examination in 1917 and joined Madras Presidency College where he took his B.A. in 1921. Somehow young Reddy was not inclined towards studies in general, so he was not able to concentrate on them. He was taking more years than usual to pass examinations. His uncle wanted him to do his B.L. Even though he was not for it, he did it for the regard and love he had for his uncle as he says. Even while he was studying Law in Madras he was concentrating on Telugu for on one day he approached Manavallu Rama Ratna, a Telugu poet to help him in the books that he should study to improve in his Telugu. He brought a list and bought the books and then started studying them.

He had not given up Sanskrit either for it is interesting to note that his deep attachment for it made him go to Vedam

Venkataraya shastri who said that he should become a vegetarian if he wanted to make headway in Sanskrit! Accordingly he became a vegetarian and remained one till the end of his life and Vedam taught him Sanskrit.

Reddy was writing already interesting articles on various subjects, and getting them published in various Telugu Magazines. With all these literary activities, one wonders how much progress he could have made in Law! He failed as usual in this new course F. L. and again sat for it and passed. In 1924 he took his Law Degree. He was happy he said that once for all he could say good-bye to these examinations in which he neither fared well nor liked them.

Now he returned to his village and started freely to study Telugu and Sanskrit literature. He felt there was no need for him to practice law or take up any other job. He thought of serving his country through his writings. He wanted to become a reputed author.

However man proposes and God disposes for an interesting incident made him go to Hyderabad. Some one stole a gold box (pandan) from "Amarachinta Samasthanam" and sold it cheaply to a relation of one Basi Reddy. The latter was arrested and he approached Krishna Reddy to help him. He, in his turn, asked his nephew Pratapa Reddy, who was a lawyer by then, if not by practice at least by Degree to go to Hyderabad, to help him in the case. When he came to Hyderabad he sought the help of Raja Bahadur Venkata Rama Reddy and Pingle Venkata Rama Reddy, in whose house he stayed while he was a student at Nizam College. Venkatarama Reddy while helping him in the case asked to do something in return for him. Pratapa Reddy was asked to take charge of the Reddy Hostel which the former had started about 10 years ago.

Pratapa Reddy had no other alternative but to say "Yes;" while accepting the office he said to himself that Basi Reddy was liberated and his servility had started perhaps! For somehow he

did not like to stay in Hyderabad much less did he like his new job. This Hostel was so very dear to the Rajah Bahadur and when the young lawyer leisurely observed his charge, he found to his surprise, that most of the students were from rich families and some of them were children of highly influential people. All of them were wearing Turkish dress as was the fashion of the day which somehow did not appeal to Pratapa Reddy. Further all of them were highly indisciplined; they spent money irresponsibly and ran into debts and some of them took law into their own hands and beat the officers of the Hostel, who out of fear, left the office and ran away for good. Raja Bahadur did not punish the students but was strict with officers. This state of affairs did not please Pratapa Reddy, who, with a desire to reform this important Organisation, put before Raja Bahadur the following conditions and, only if they were agreed to, he would accept the office.

1. Every one should work honorarily.
2. A constitution for the Hostel including rules and regulations to run the Hostel should be drawn up.
3. He should have the authority to put these rules and regulations into effect. His word in this regard must be final; the Governing Body should not interfere.

Raja Bahadur agreed and Reddy accepted the office of the Secretary and he immediately started right in earnest putting into effect the rules and regulations of the Hostel. His life in Madras hostels and the discipline there came to his rescue. He introduced all those rules here. There were 80 students in the hostel at the time of his joining the office. Soon the number was doubled. The Turkish dress of the boys strangely enough also disappeared.

He established a debating society and made students often participate in them. Regular lectures by scholars were

organised. Students were asked to speak too. They were not allowed to spend nights out. So much so, their examination results that year proved to be wonderful. Many obtained first classes and medals and other awards. For eight years, Reddy managed this Hostel with distinction.

He improved the Library. Sometimes events take place perhaps just to show base and banal qualities in men. Somehow Savarkar's book "War of Indian Independence" found its way into the Library of the Hostel to which Reddy objected and told Raja Bahadur about this. He paid little attention to it and said "Let the book be there and it was not going to bother any one". But soon the Police had lodged complaints to Raja Bahadur that all was not well with the Hostel and every student was given to Nationalist Politics and were even offering Satyagraha! One person was blamed for all this and that was Pratapa Reddy. All kinds of unjust accusations were filed against him. Those officers of the Hostels, who could not tolerate him for all the discipline he maintained in the Hostel, took this opportunity and started blaming him. So shocked at this treatment, for all his pioneering work given them free of cost, for he took no salary; that he had no other alternative but to resign.

Meanwhile his uncle was coaxing him to start his legal practice. No profession those days seemed to be more lucrative for one thing and commanding of respect and regard for another than that of law. It would give him all the independence he craved for and yet somehow he did not see eye to eye with his uncle; so he went to his village Itikelapadu and spent 6 months there writing a book on "Hinduvula Pandugalu" (Hindus Festivals). However he came to peace with his uncle by deciding to set up his practice at Kurnool. For various reasons he did not like Hyderabad.

Once again circumstances went against this plan for when he met Rajah Bahadur prior to his going to Kurnool to say good-bye the latter prevailed upon him to stay at Hyderabad for which he did not agree. But the Kotval with his persuasive

power and affectionate attitude towards him, won over the young man who had finally agreed to stay.

This had opened a new chapter for him and also for Telangana. The Kotval had started a newspaper called "Gol-konda Patrika" for which he wanted our young Reddy to become the editor. Since a lawyer could not be an editor, they transferred the Printing Press and other allied properties to one Gad-dampalli Ramakrishna Reddy and the editor was a relation of the late Konda Venkata Randa Reddy called Bala Krishna Reddy. Whereas Pratapa Reddy was the de facto editor and all in all of the Newspaper, the Kotval promised to pay him Rs. 200 a month for his work, but then ultimately only a 100 rupees was paid to him!

One does not know exactly for how many years he practised as a lawyer, however it is surmised that for about 8 years he was in it and never showed practically any interest. As Burgula Ramakrishna Rao, a fellow lawyer at the time, gives a true picture of Reddy how he was banking on integrity and morality for the success of a case, whereas one has to use one's skill in arguing and upsetting the laws in making one's client win and not depend on "Dharma" to earn money and come up in one's life. Pratapa Reddy, in short, was not equal to all these. His honesty and uprightness would not permit him to do these character acrobatics to be successful in the profession. His knowledge of Law, as Dr. Rama Raju had said, only helped him to know the depths of Manu Dharma Shashtra and other codes of Hindu Law.

However Pratapa Reddy was now the editor of the "Gol-konda Patrika" which was in the beginning a Bi-weekly. One cannot imagine the difficulties of a Telugu newspaper in Hyderabad for people were not interested in Telugu and were frightened of the Government that was totally against the language, for fear it was inclined towards nationalist movement. No reporters—none to write articles, so there were obstacles galore.

On the other hand in Andhra, in Madras presidency, newspapers were flourishing as early as in the last quarter of the 19th century. Kandukuri Veeresalingam, Kokkonda Venkataratnam, Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham all had newspapers which were working gloriously. Poor Pratapa Reddy had to strive very hard indeed to make the paper run. As a pioneer and a nationalist at heart, he had specially run into difficulties and yet in course of time made a success of the paper. It established the fact that the journal made courageous endeavours to establish the importance of Telugu language, secondly the paper was just and impartial to every body's cause - fought for Truth. In its annual edition in 1936, it said that it did not hide Truth, because it was hard nor did it, out of animosity, spread untruth. With faith in God and being aware of existing conditions it exerted its self only.

The paper was a pioneer in strengthening the Andhra Movement. Reddy wrote for complete freedom for women. For ten long years Reddy worked very hard and it could be said that in a way the paper took roots, and it was established. But soon hard days had fallen on the paper for Balakrishna Reddy who was the nominal editor of the paper started giving trouble by threatening that the paper would be stopped since he was not paid adequately and all the money collected by the paper was his and so on. This had made the Kotval try hard to seek special permission for Pratapa Reddy to be the actual editor from 1939.

By this time Reddy had written 900 essays and poems editorials, criticisms, about 100 articles to the journals; when he left the editorship in 1947 he must have had many more articles and most of which he had written under a different pen name.

In 1947 the bi-weekly had become a daily paper and with the change of management, new conditions were offered to the editor which were not acceptable to him. So Reddy left.

In 1931 Pratapa Reddy started a new paper called "Praja Vani" on a grand scale. Many people contributed well and became its share-holders. But bickerings among the members were responsible for the closing of the paper in a short time. Needless to tell how unhappy Reddy felt over this.

Madapaty Hanumantha Rao who was doing a good deal of sincere social service, to the people of Telangana, was seeking for another genuinely interested person to join him in this service; his choice fell on Reddy.

Both of them toured many districts addressing people and rousing the public to many a worthy cause. Reddy, although was not used to this life, started addressing audiences on many invaluable subjects such as libraries, their role in society, education, existing unhappy conditions and many other such subjects.

A small untoward incident led to the establishment of Andhra Jana Sangham at Hyderabad. There was a conference of the Hindu Social Reforms in 1921 at Viveka Vardhini Theatre, when Maharshi Donde Kesava Karve was presiding. The majority of the audience was Maharashtrian and the President was a Maharashtrian; the atmosphere was somehow antagonised to Telugu people; whenever a Telugu speaker began to address the meeting, there was pandemonium and one could not continue his speech; so all the Telugu speakers in a fit of temper left the hall and that very day they met at a place and formed what is known as Andhra Jana Sangham, for which Reddy was the President for the year. In course of time this organisation became Andhra Maha Sabha which first met at Jogipet in 1930 when Pratapa Reddy presided and delivered a memorable address about which the Deccan Star, an English newspaper reported "Mr. Pratapa Reddy, B.A., B.L. delivered a highly illuminating and instructive address which breathes the spirit of nationalism and a burning zeal for service to the public".

Reddy continued his interest in the organisation for about six or seven years when difference of opinion with members made him cease his connections with it.

He and some of his friends started another venture called "Vignana Vardhani Parishad". Every one spoke or read a research paper regularly at this organisation and it started publishing books too. Reddy's "Ramayana Viscshamulu" was published by it. He was its secretary the first two years and later became its president.

He was also one of the founder members of Andhra Sahitya Parishad. He worked for its welfare and he presided over its second conference.

Pratapa Reddy was in the lime light then; there was no end to his speeches and presiding over conferences. He was closely connected with the Library Movement and presided over many a conference connected with this. As a matter of fact almost all the libraries in Telangana had his sincere support.

In 1952 he was returned to the Assembly on the Congress ticket from Mahboobnagar District. He was not enamoured of it, but friends like Burgula Rama Krishna Rao, Konda Venkataranga Reddy encouraged him to become an M.L.A., so that he could serve the people better. In 1953 he, with some of the prominent men of Telangana, decided to have a separate State for Andhra. A movement for Vishalandhra was started and very easily he was associated with this, for that matter, with every movement in the history of the Hyderabad Andhras.

He was not only a gifted speaker. He was a prolific writer. There is not a feature of Telugu Literature in which he has not written.

He was a poet. He started composing even while a student. In 1918 many of his poems were published in "Krishna Patrika". "Champakke Bramara Vishadam" was a long poem

story, "Premarpana" was a short poem depicting a story in which he had explained that true love is blind; it knows no caste or creed or class. His famous "Hamvira Sambhavamamu" is again a short story poem of 25 verses. It is a Rajaput story where a prince while on his hunt was chasing a pig which ran into a field where a pretty peasant girl was keeping watch. He went there and when the girl saw the king, she asked him to rest and she would go and fetch the animal, which she very ably did. This struck the king for he felt she was both beautiful and brave and asks as to who she was, she says.

Her people are proud that they will not bow before the rich. In spite of poverty they had principles of integrity, in the war they would not show their backs. The Telugu poem that depicts this is really beautiful and lilted with music. Hearing this he was even more impressed and asks her father to see him so that he could propose for her marriage with him. He marries her and their son was Hamvira.

"Mahmood Gaznavi", "Dharmasanamu", "Madyapana-mu" "Padmini" are some of his many poetical works.

He had written essays. These too he had started writing when he was a student. "Gourava Harishchandra", "Dasakumara Charitram" "Andhra Vangmaya Seva" "Biddala Chadduvu", Pen portraits of "Raja Bahadur". "Vedam Venkataraya Snastri" "Panugallukota Panchesvaramu". He wrote some plays too. "Uchala Vishada Natakamu" was one which he dedicated to his uncle Krishna Reddy. There was his "Bhakta Tukaram" a social drama. He wrote novels too; "Areveeyrulu Shuddhanta" in one of them. Among his short stories, "Nireekshana" he thought was his best. He wrote about a dozen stories full of satire.

He wrote biographies which include Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy and "Suravaramuvari Vamsa Charitra", "Swavishaya Samgrahamu" and "Hindustani Charitramu". The last one was prescribed as a text book in High Schools. "Raja

Bahadur" went into two editions. This was translated into English.

While writing a preface to the book "Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy" C. R. Reddy says, "There is no need to review this excellent narrative presented by an accomplished writer of Telugu Prose".

There are some research books to his credit too viz. "Hinduvula Pandugalu", "Haindava Dharmaveerulu" "Ramayana Viseshamulu", "Yuvajana Vignanamamu" and a host of others.

Just as he hoped when he was a boy that he should be a renowned poet, he became not only a poet but proved himself a versatile genius in all forms of Telugu literature and enhanced it by his invaluable contributions.

His sudden demise in 1953 came as a shock not only to Telangana but to the whole of Andhra. The State in particular and the country in general had lost a very sincere man of letters whose integrity had added stature to our State.

Damerla Rama Rao

(1897 – 1925)

It may sound chauvinistic to claim that Damerla was one of the most inspired artists of Modern India, but his astonishing career in art testifies to it. He has created what may be truly described as a new poetic in painting which has won recognition in our country and abroad. His was a wide ranging consciousness, that could command both the past and present which endowed his painting with a richness of meaning and a creative quality that has been surely unequalled.

Even as a student he displayed his natural inclination and painted many a picture that drew the attention of one and all. He did not merely copy any style. He would study the Eastern and Western style and put before him the ancient method and draw out of it a synthesis of all and showed his own unique style of painting. Art was part and parcel of his self.

Rama Rao was the second son of Damarla Ramana Rao of Rajahmundry where he was born in 1897. While studying at the Government Arts College at Rajahmundry, his English Principal Mr. O. J. Cooldray noticed his talent and advised him to join the J. J. School of Arts at Bombay. He also helped him financially. Even as his Principal prophesied, Rama Rao distinguished himself at the School and he was awarded the Mayo Medal. His outstanding contribution won him a place in the School itself, for he was appointed later a member of the Teaching Faculty of the School.

Rama Rao travelled extensively in India and visited not only temple cities but places of art like Ajanta, Elephanta, Ellora, Nasik and studied the various types of arts and evolved his own

style thereby. He went to Calcutta and met many art luminaries like Avanindra Nath Tagore and Nandalal Bose and took special interest in Bengali Art and made a study of it.

In 1920 he had an opportunity of meeting Rabindranath Tagore at Bhavanagar where he had gone to paint the pictures of royal princes. He drew a rough sketch of Tagore within ten minutes and the poet was highly impressed with it and knew that young Rama Rao was highly gifted.

Rama Rao studied all kinds of art and many themes of Nature and those that give meaning to art, like the colour combinations, but his independent spirit would not easily allow him to follow any of these but he had developed his own style of painting which in many ways seemed an excellent one in its own way and he called it the "Andhra Sampradayamu".

In 1920 he returned from Bombay and settled in his own home town Rajahmundry where he established his studio in his own house. He married Stayavani who was also an artist. Both had pursued the artist's life.

Young as he was, he was able to participate in many of the Art Exhibitions within and without India and many of his exhibits were bringing him laurels. His picture "Siddhartani Ragodayamu" was selected for the Exhibition at Toronto, Japan.

His beautiful painting portrayed that he was equally well conversant with scenes of Nature and those of Humanity. In 1921 his pictures "Sarovaramu" (River) was sold for a big price at Bombay Exhibition and his Godari Kanuma (The bank of Godavari) was bought by no less a person than Viceroy Reading.

In 1928 he established what was known as the Andhra Bharatiya Chitra Kala Parishad at Rajahmundry and within a short time it captured the imagination of many young people who were inclined towards Art and many had enrolled themselves as members and tried to learn Rama Rao's style of painting. He was not only becoming known in India but was getting

to be known abroad because of his attractive and meaningful pictures. And it was felt he was becoming an international figure, but Nature ordained it otherwise, for he was ill for a short time and passed away in 1925 leaving the field of Art in Andhra very poor indeed.

In the revived new Art of Andhra, Rama Rao brought a new light to it. It seemed, even in the short span of life that he lived, there were three periods; one the youthfull period, the second was Ajanta and the last was Andhra where he started noticing the daily life and his pictures depict its beauty. He seemed to have reached a kind of perfection when compared to the first two periods and the pictures painted during this period were most attractive and beautiful.

Potti Sreeramulu

(1890 – 1952)

Few in our time have shown the kind of courage of convictions that Potti Sreeramulu has and fewer still could have laid down their lives for the cause dearest to them as he has done. It was his glorious martyrdom that helped Andhras to attain statehood which led eventually to the political unification of all Telugu speaking people after centuries of separation. His epic sacrifice has indeed given a new content to the concept of service to the people and inaugurated a new era in the history of the Andhras.

Till his martyrdom, he was not well known. It was his grim determination and selfless desire to achieve a separate State for the Telugu speaking people, that made him venture in an indeterminate fast.

He started this fast, his fourth one, at Mylapore in Bulusu Sambamoorthy's house on October 19th in 1952. Unfortunately neither the people nor the Government did anything to prevent this fast. His intimate friends and some leaders in the beginning strongly prevailed upon him to give up the fast, but he was adamant. He was determined to go through this, as he seemed to have made a personal pledge unto himself.

This was not his first fast, for prior to this he had three occasions to undertake long fasts.

In the year 1946 for the first time he had gone on a fast to make the orthodox people open the doors of Sri Venugopala

Swamy temple at Nellore for the Harijans. He succeeded in his endeavours for the Harijans were allowed to enter the temple. He accordingly broke his fast.

The second time, when he went on a fast, it was again in the interest and welfare of the Harijans, that he requested the Government of Madras to introduce two laws. To expedite this matter, he indirectly compelled the Government as it were by the threat of his fast. This time he fasted for 23 days and the Government yielded to his request and he broke his fast.

Again for the third time he went on a fast at Wardha in 1948 as a disciplinary action. He fasted for 29 days.

Sriramulu although was born at Madras, his forbears were from the village of Patamatapalle in Nellore District. His father Gurnvayya, mother Mahalakshmmamma with their family lived in Madras for a number of years. They belonged to the Vaisya community.

Sreeramulu was therefore brought up in Madras where he lived till he was twenty years old. He was educated there. After that he proceeded to Bombay to study for Sanitary Engineering in which he was successful and there-after secured a position in the great Indian Peninsula Railway Office on a salary of 250 p.m.

In his twenty fifth year, the sad and sudden demise of his wife made him lose all interest in life. He was sorrow-stricken, lonely and terribly frustrated. He could not any more live with the zeal and enthusiasm as he used to prior to this calamity. His sadness combined with his loneliness turned a new chapter in his life. It was in fact a milestone in his life. His outlook became one of renunciation. He lost his interest in worldly affairs, so he turned to dedicate his life for the sake of the Nation. It was at that time Gandhiji was appealing to the Nation to join his Satyagraha and non-cooperation Movments.

Young Sreeramulu heartily responded to the clarion call of Gandhiji by resigning his job in 1927 and handing over his property and other family responsibilities to his mother and his brothers, he left for Sabarmati Ashram where Gandhiji used to live and participated most nobly and fully in all Gandhiji's programmes.

Sreeramulu by nature was a quiet person, given to unostentatious work. So he shunned publicity and worked silently and achieved good results. He went thrice to jail and continued to work quietly since his release.

For the sake of the villagers, Sreeramulu worked a great deal at Gandhiji's Ashram at Komaravole and at Rajkota in Gujarat.

He implicitly followed Gandhiji's teachings and popularised among the people Gandhiji's twin tenets of Truth and Non-violence and also worked incessantly for the cause of Harijans. Since he was away from his home town, many did not know for a long time his whereabouts.

In the last years of his life, somehow he returned to Nellore when he was requested to take up the secretaryship of Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi. He was devoting the rest of his time to Harijan welfare work. He was at this time, living the life of a recluse wearing coarse khadi, and eating only when others offered him food, otherwise he would starve.

It was in this state that he undertook this last and historic fast unto death. When he was becoming unconscious he pleaded with his companions that they should not agitate or do anything that would disturb his fast. He died a martyr. It was surprising though, how the people, the congress and the Government could not prevail upon him to give up his fast. However when he died, there was naturally a big commotion and great agitation by the people who often broke their vows, they made with

Gandhiji for they indulged in violence and vitriole. The Government naturally was compelled soon to form a separate State for the Andhras.

Sreeramulu was not merely an honest and scrupulous person but one with a tremendous amount of energy and firm determination. His early years of service and discipline had not gone unnoticed by Gandhiji. In fact it was reported that Gandhiji remarked once that if we had ten Potti Sreeramulus he would have had Swaraj within one year. Telugu speaking people who were agitating for ever so many years for a separate State for themselves ultimately got it by the great sacrifice of Potti Sreeramulu whose name is written in golden letters in the history of our State.

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